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Omarsson et al.

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(54) **ORTHOPEDIC DEVICE FOR TREATING
DROP FOOT AND METHOD FOR USING
THE SAME**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**
A61F 5/01 (2006.01)

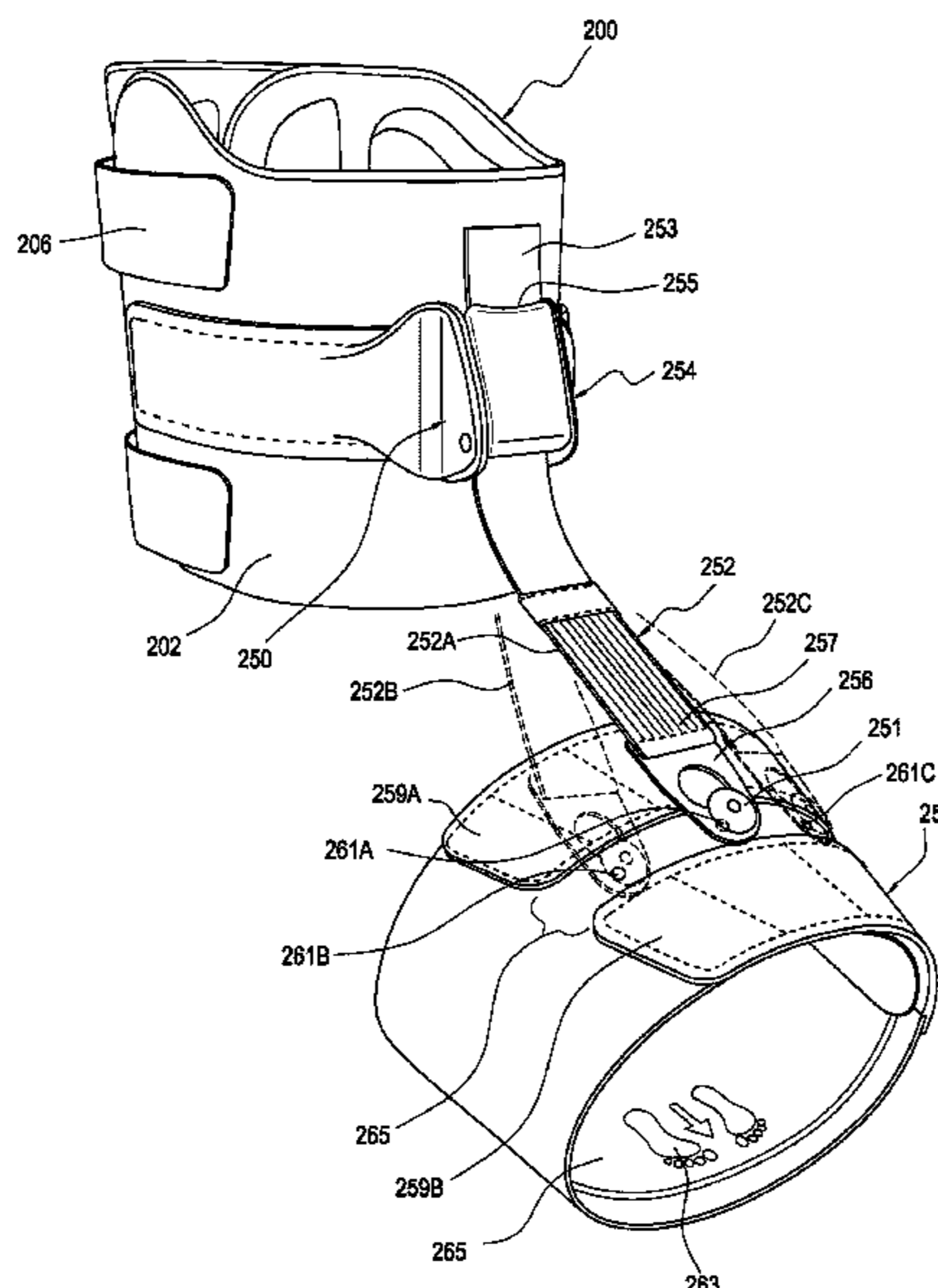
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An orthopedic device is arranged as a lightweight ankle-foot orthosis providing dynamic support for drop foot or related disorders requiring dorsiflexion. The orthopedic device includes a main support adapted to secure about a lower leg, a strap assembly having a first portion coupling to the main support, and a second portion arranged to be drawn therefrom, and an anchor for receiving and attaching to the second portion of the strap assembly. The location of the anchor along a foot component enables increased medial-lateral control, and the arrangement of the strap assembly permits dorsiflexion during swing phase of a user's gait.

14 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets



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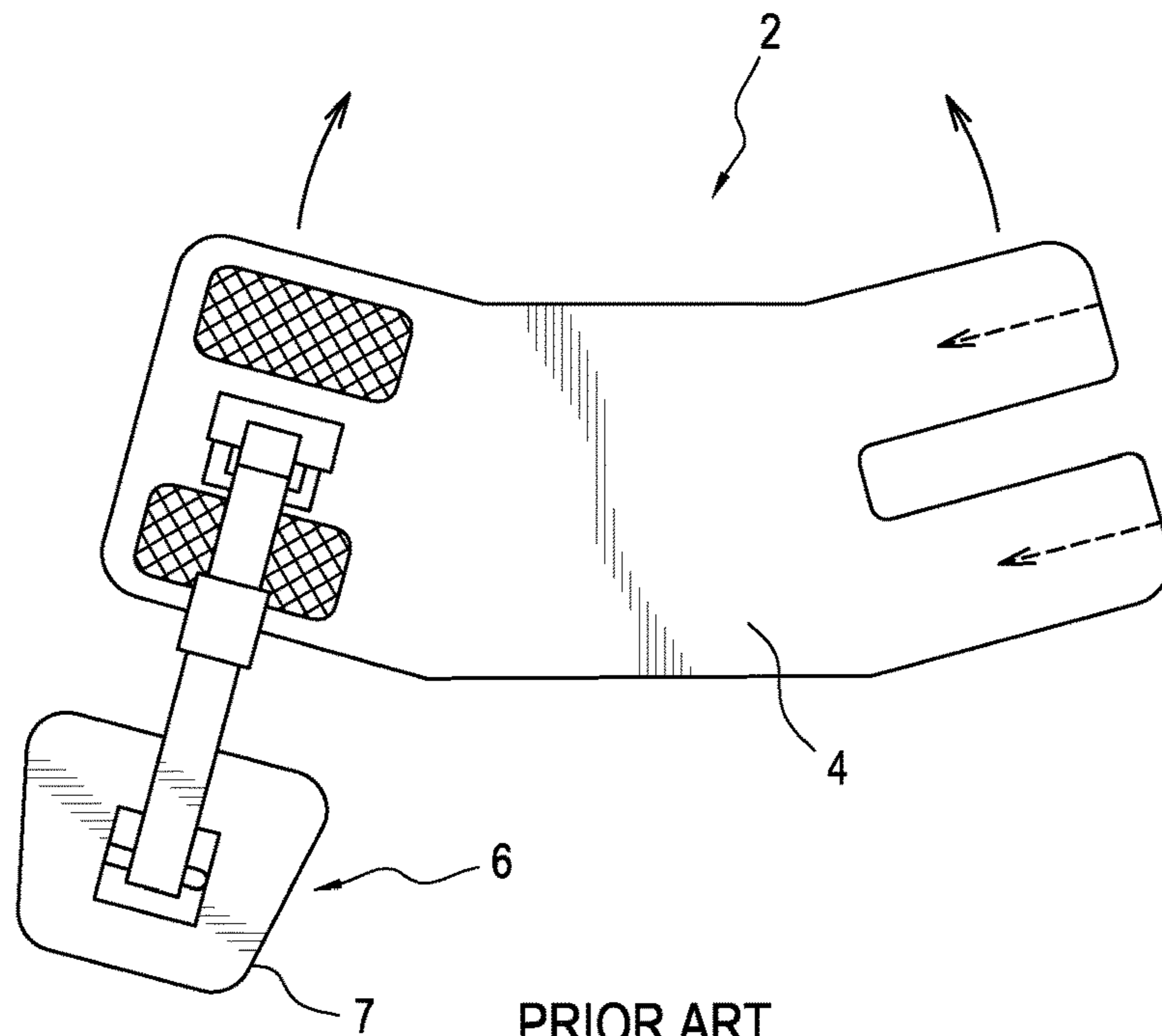
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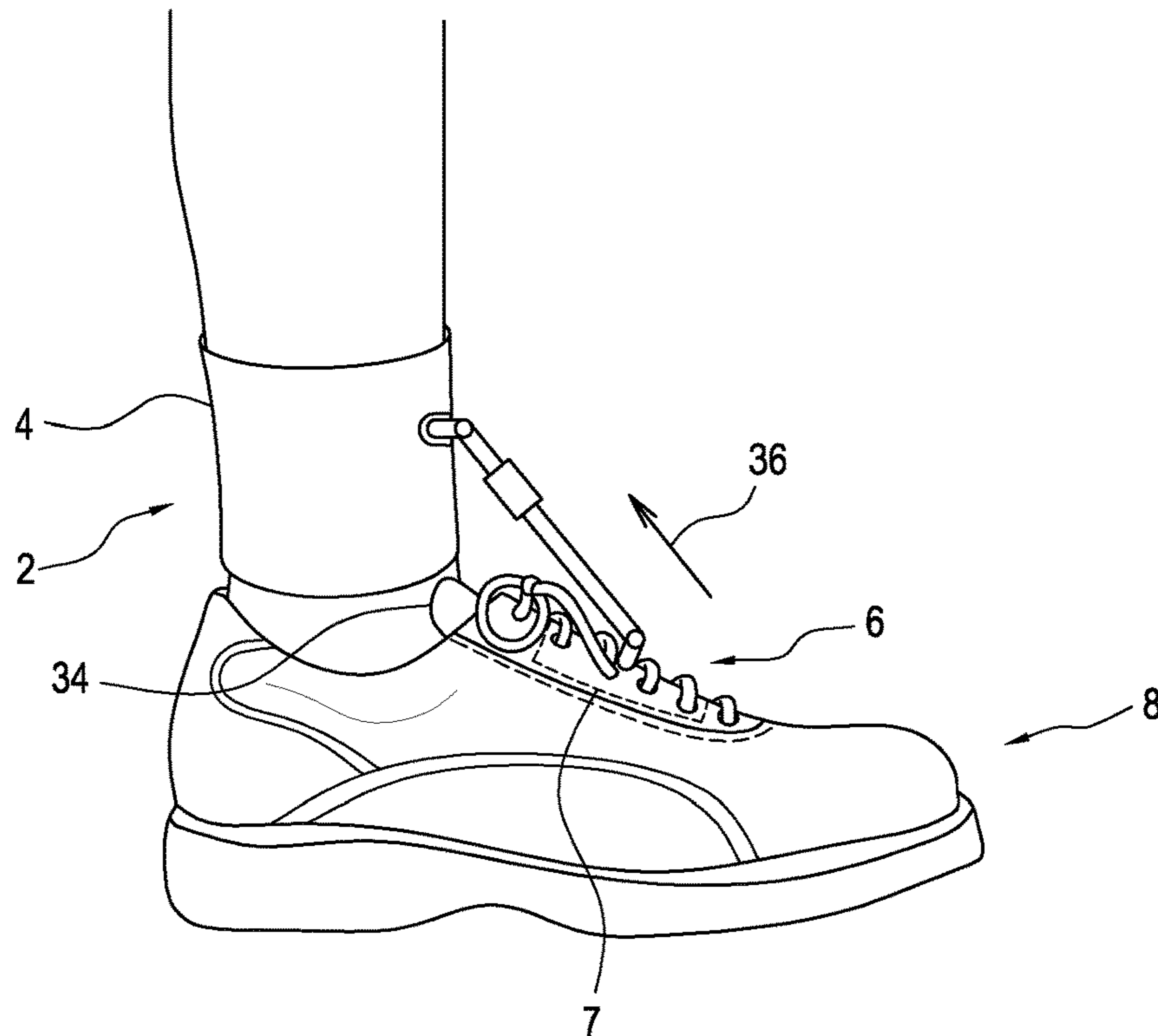
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PRIOR ART
FIG. 1A



PRIOR ART
FIG. 1B

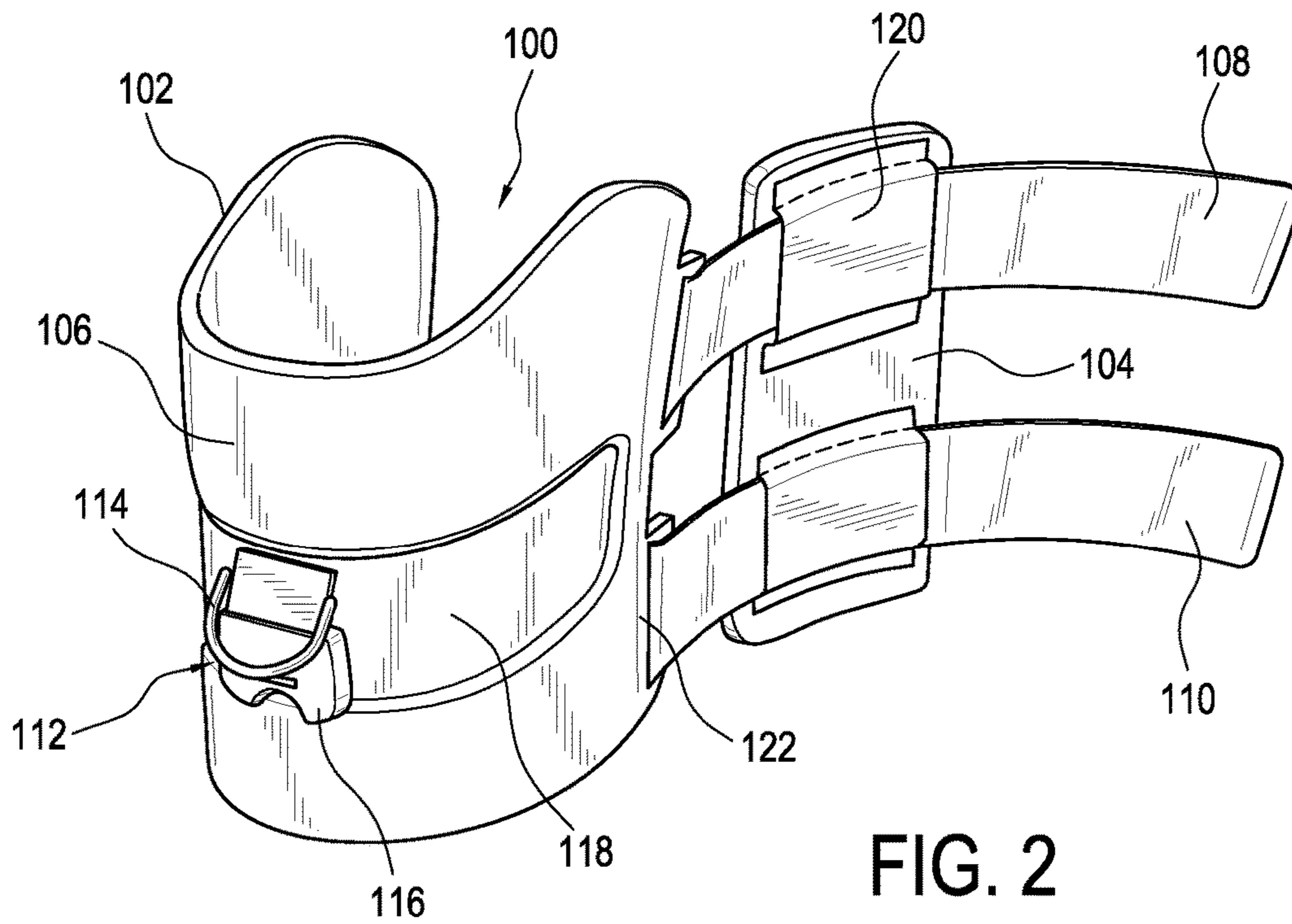


FIG. 2

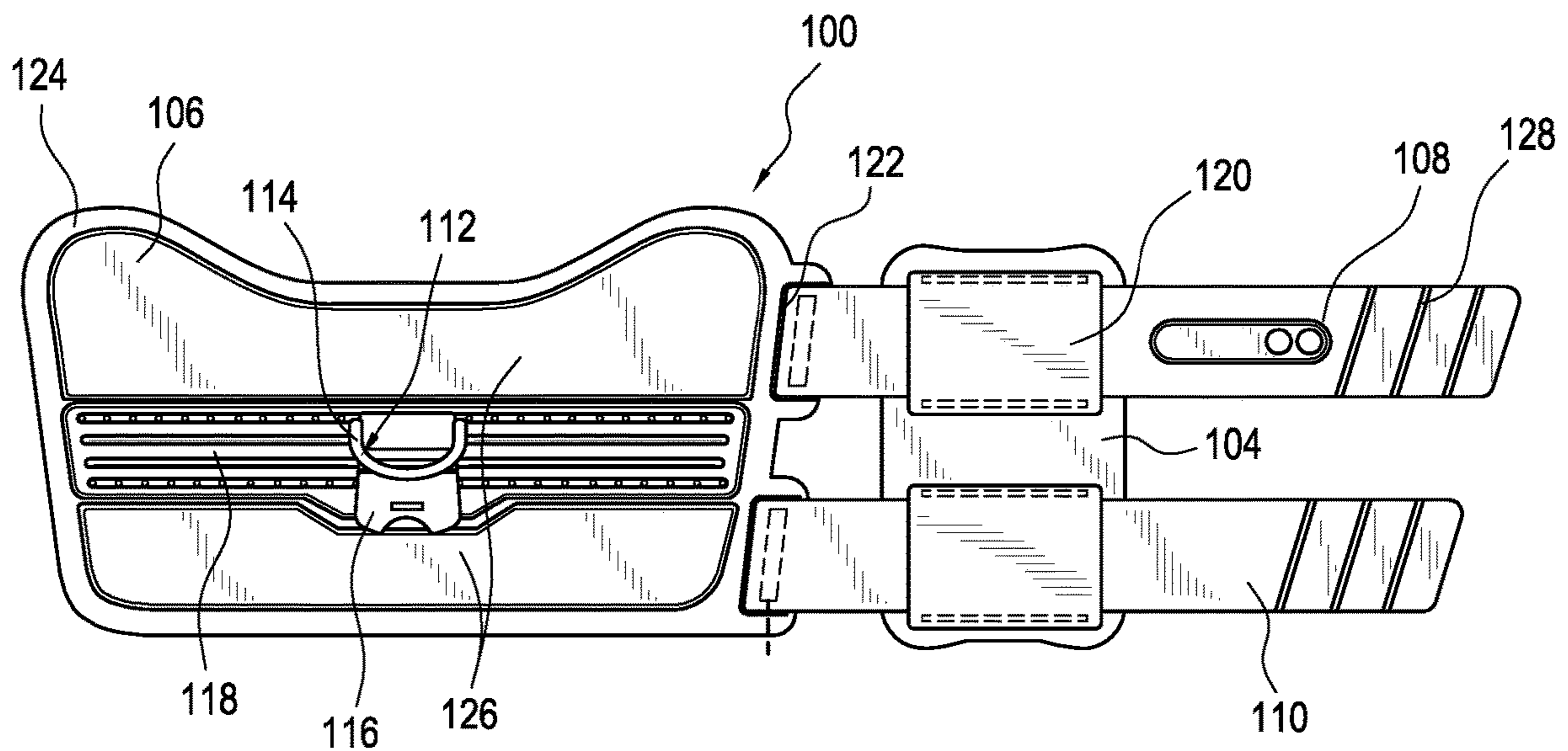


FIG. 3

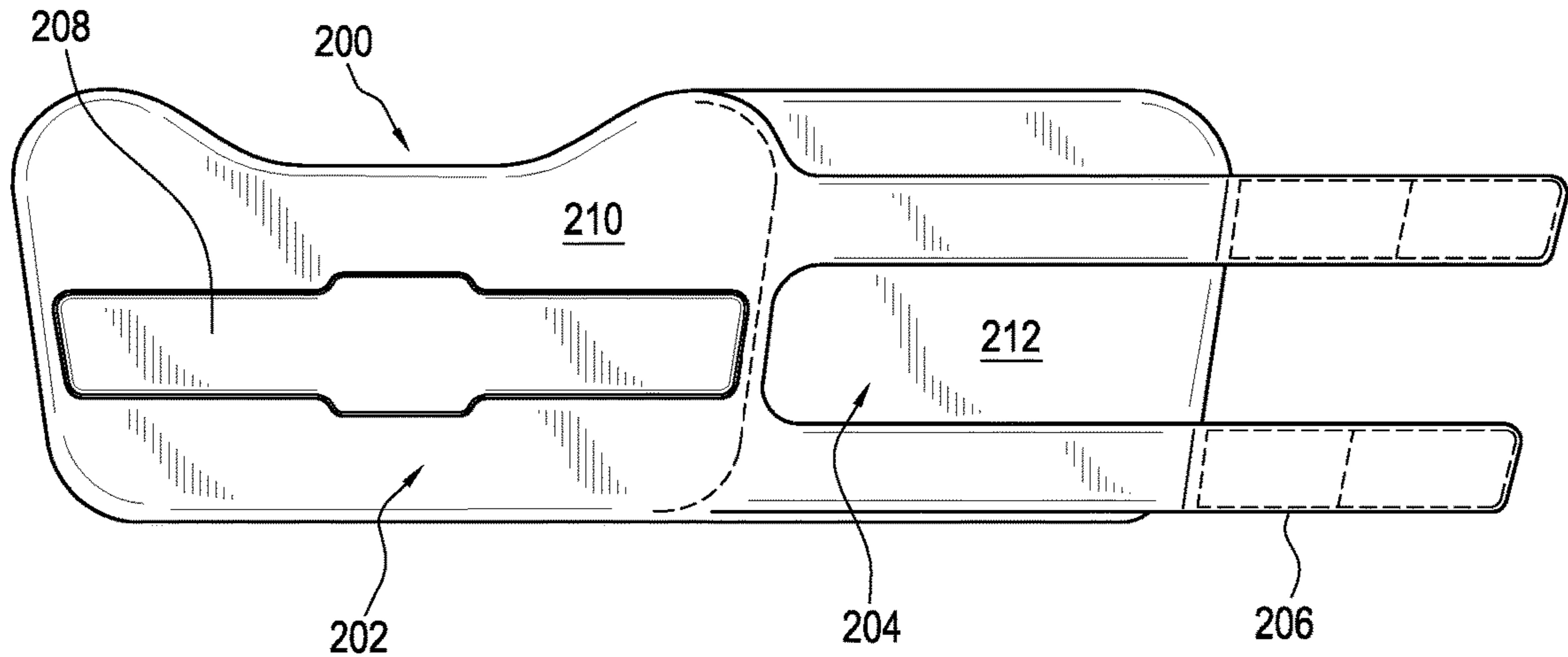


FIG. 4

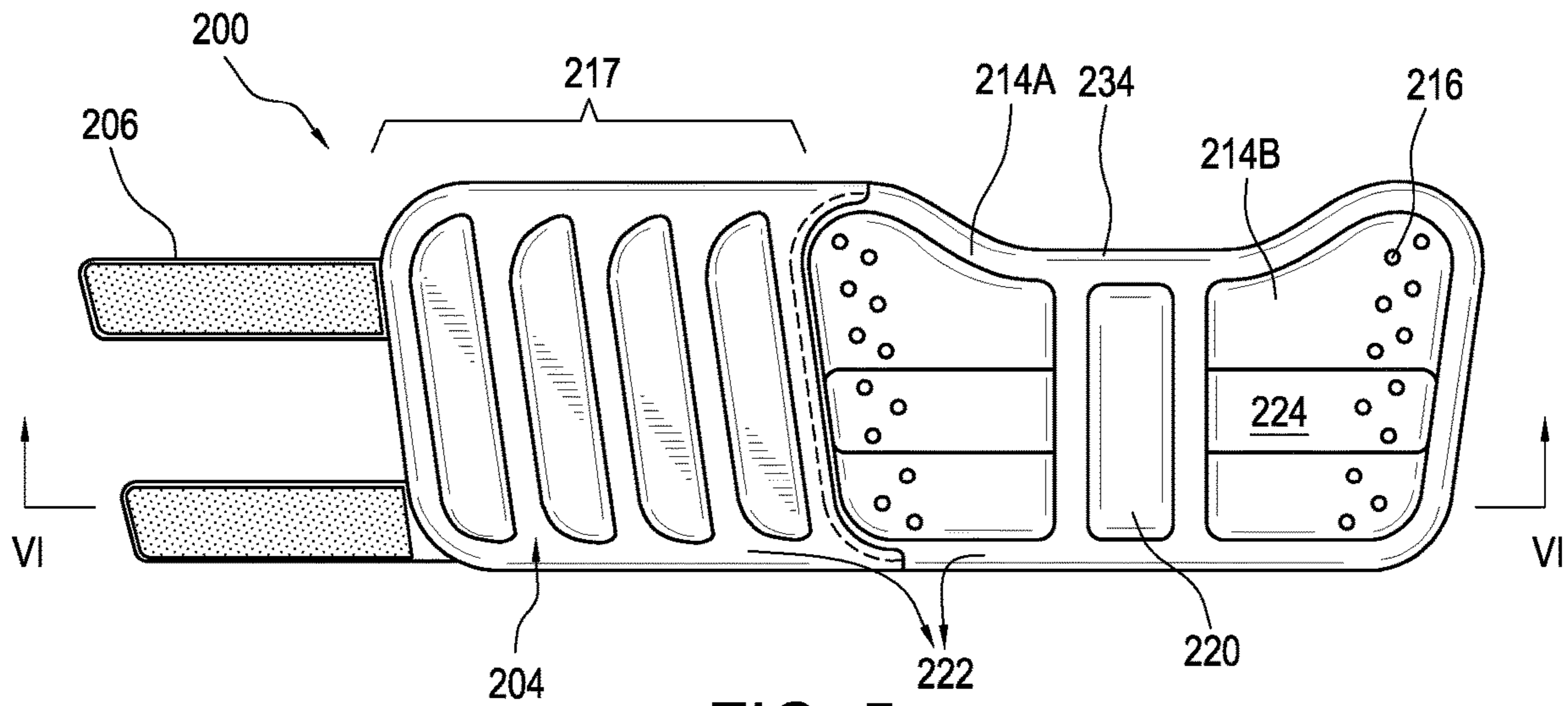


FIG. 5

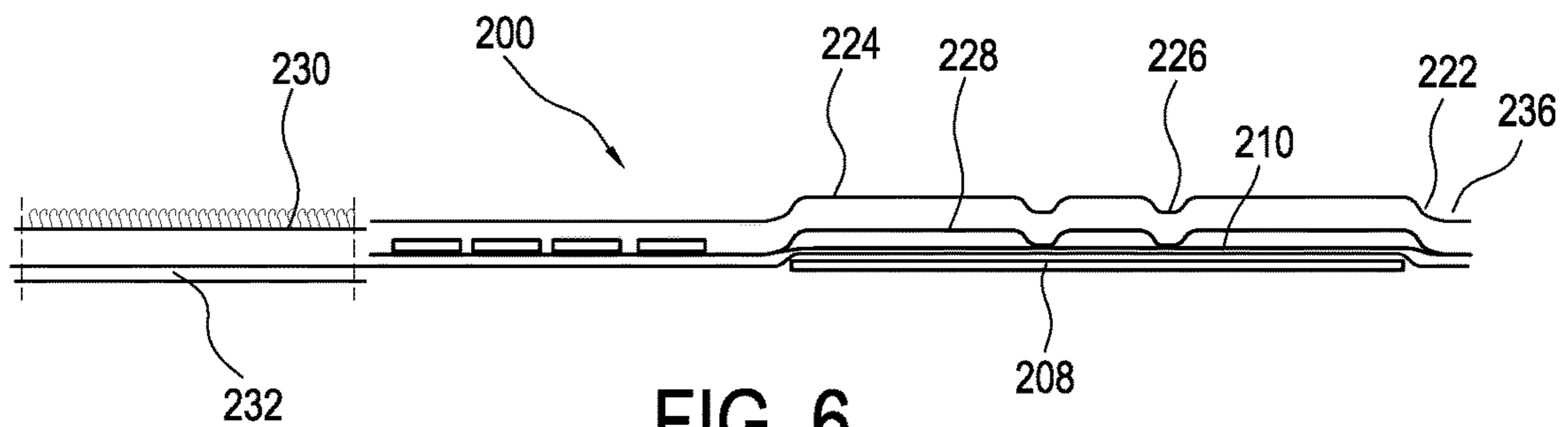
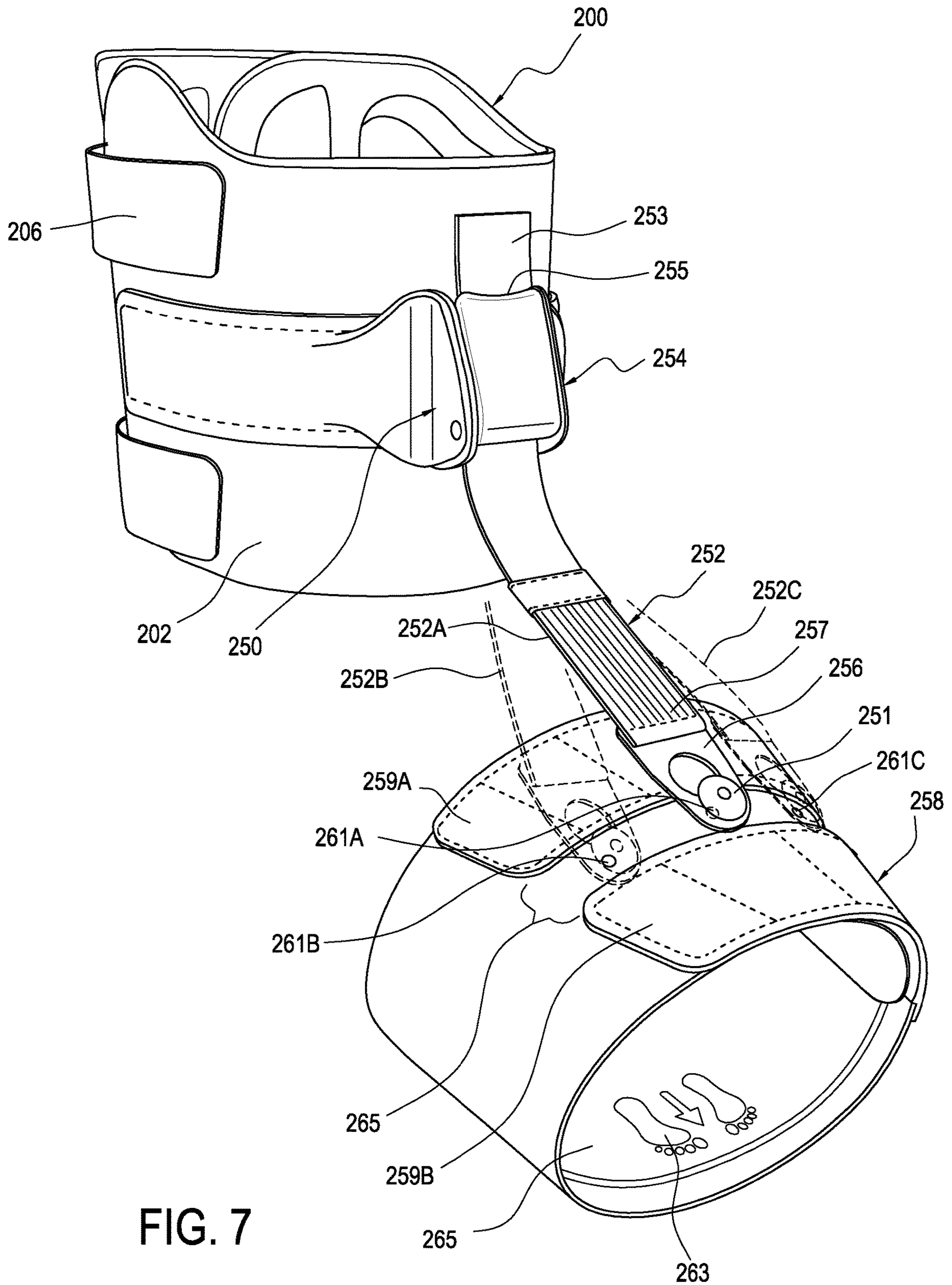
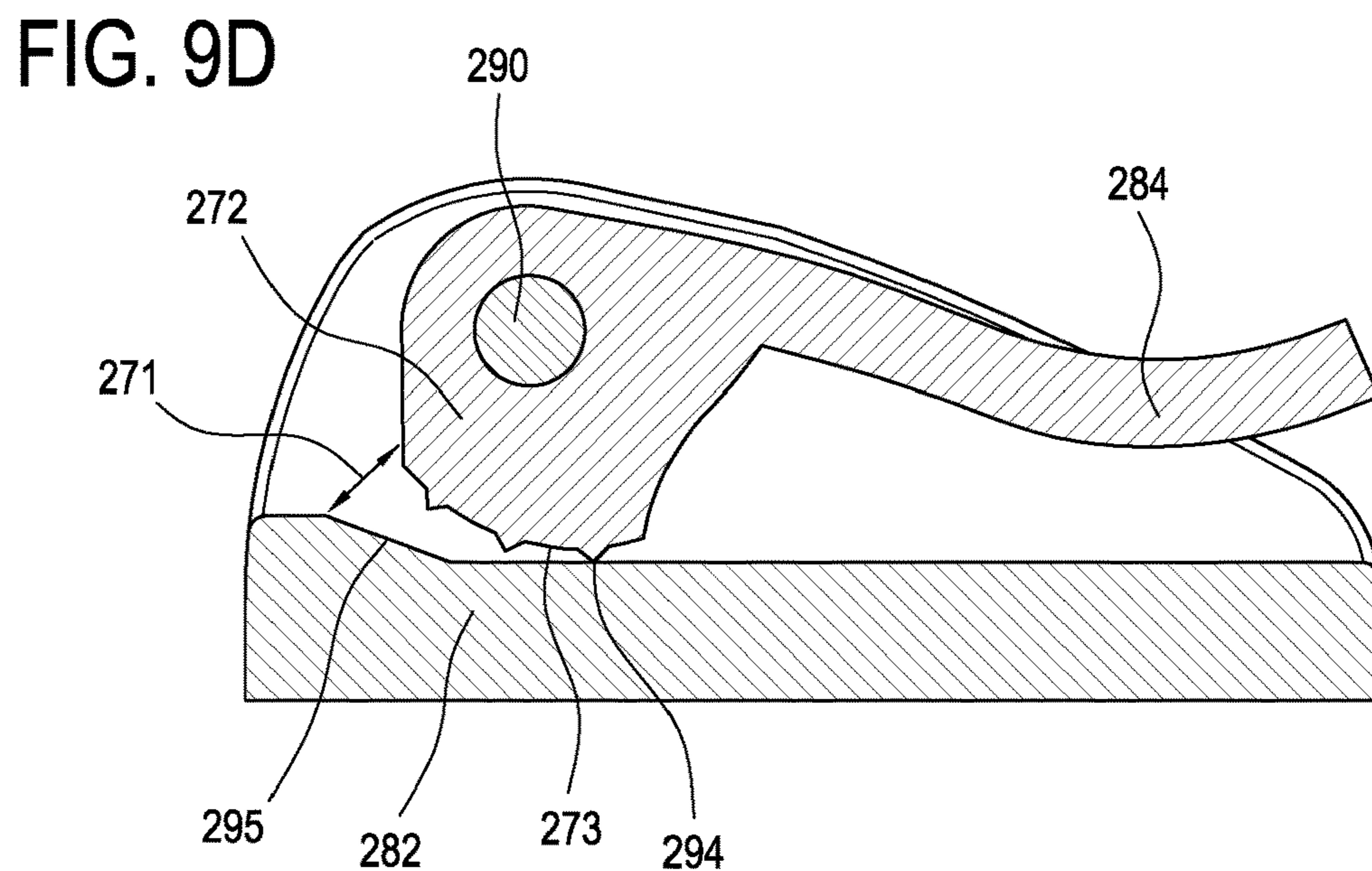
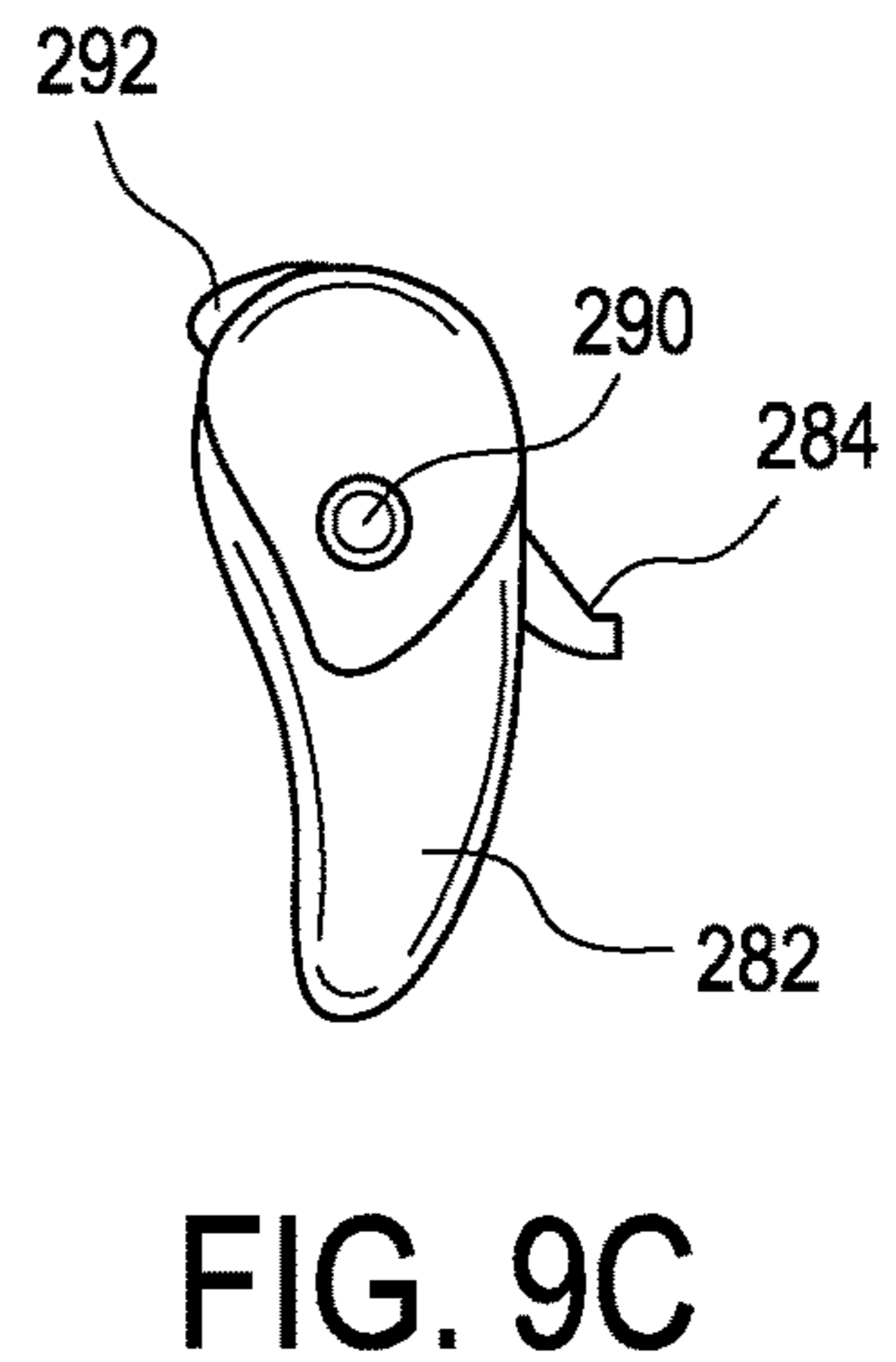
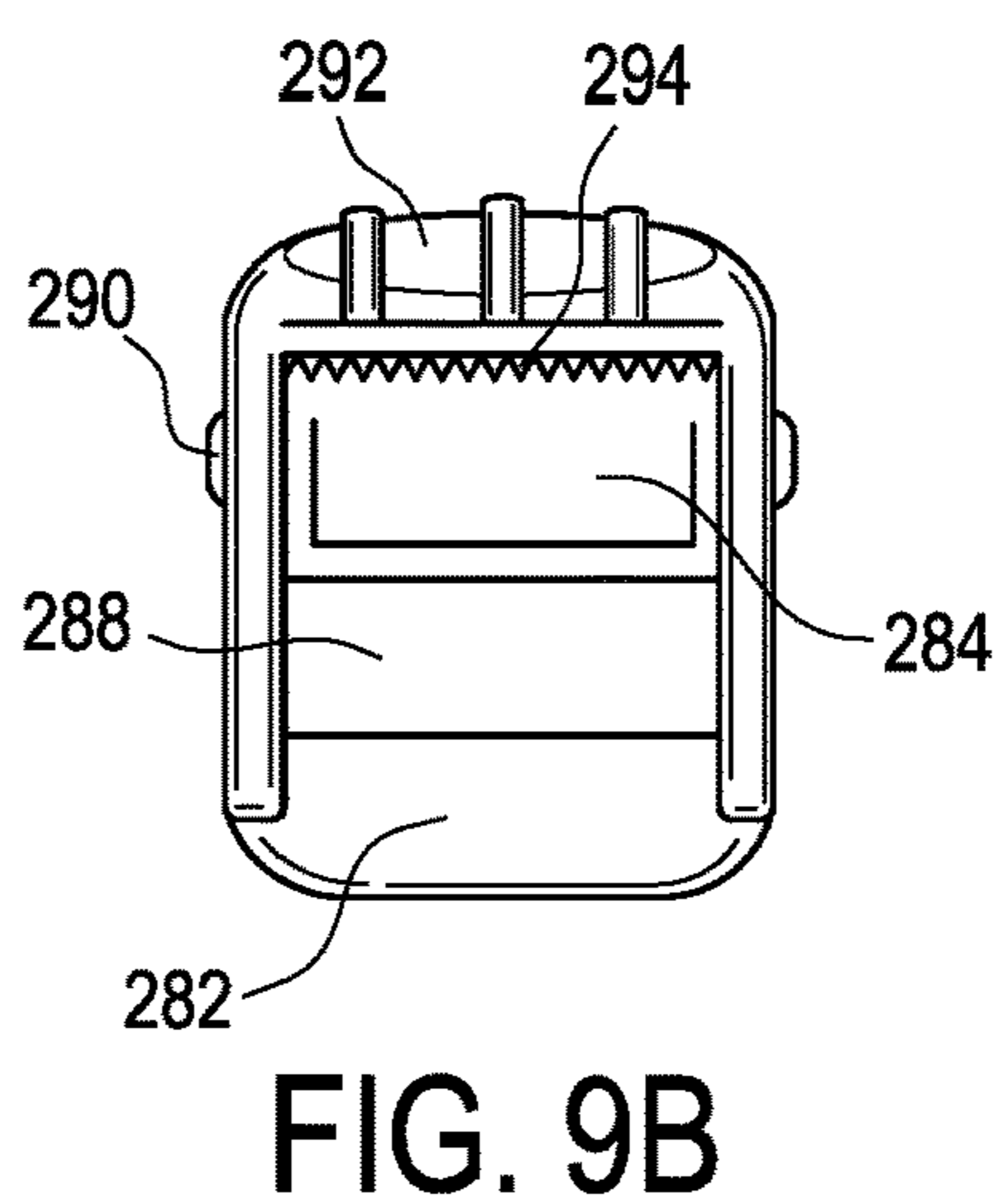
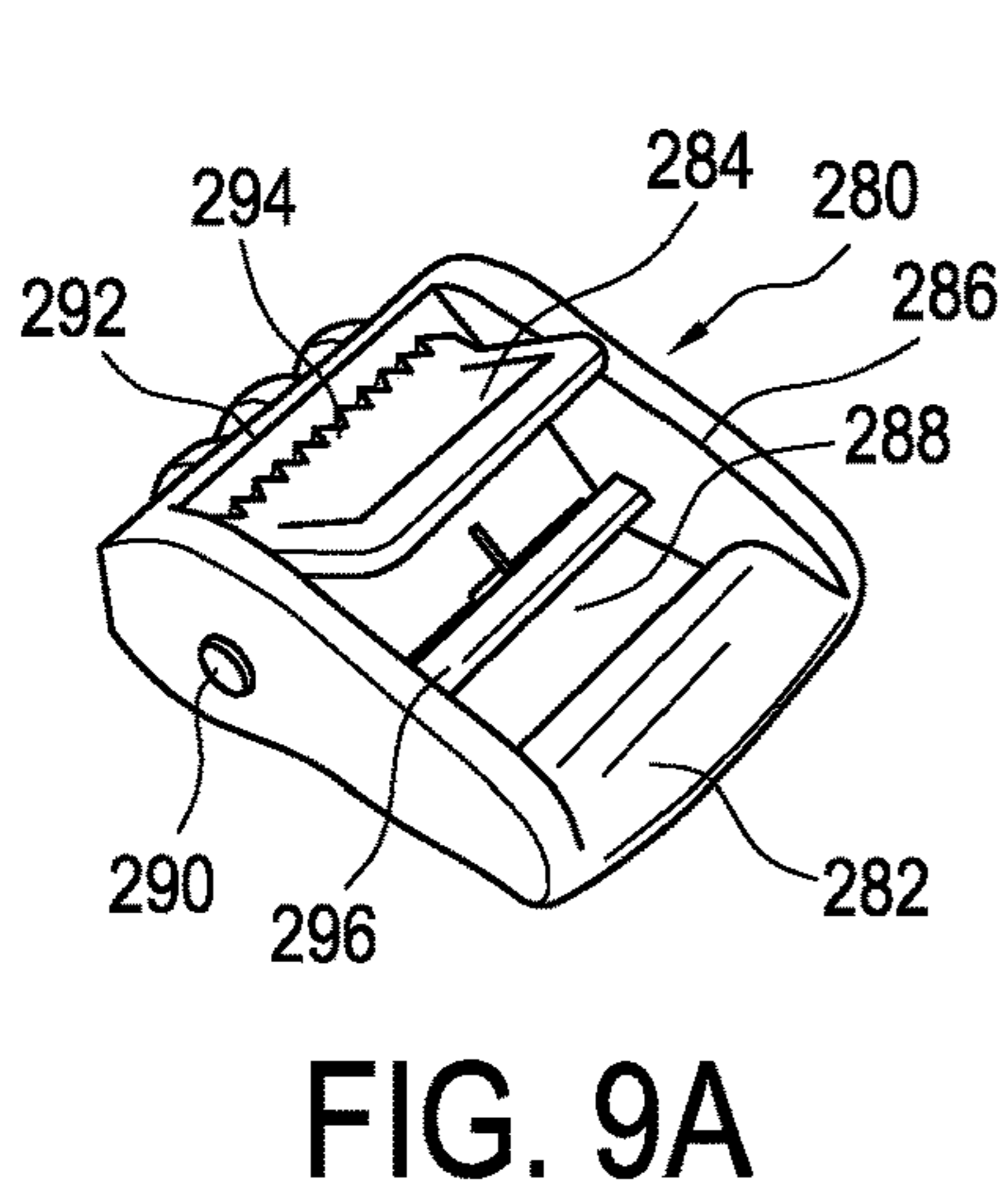
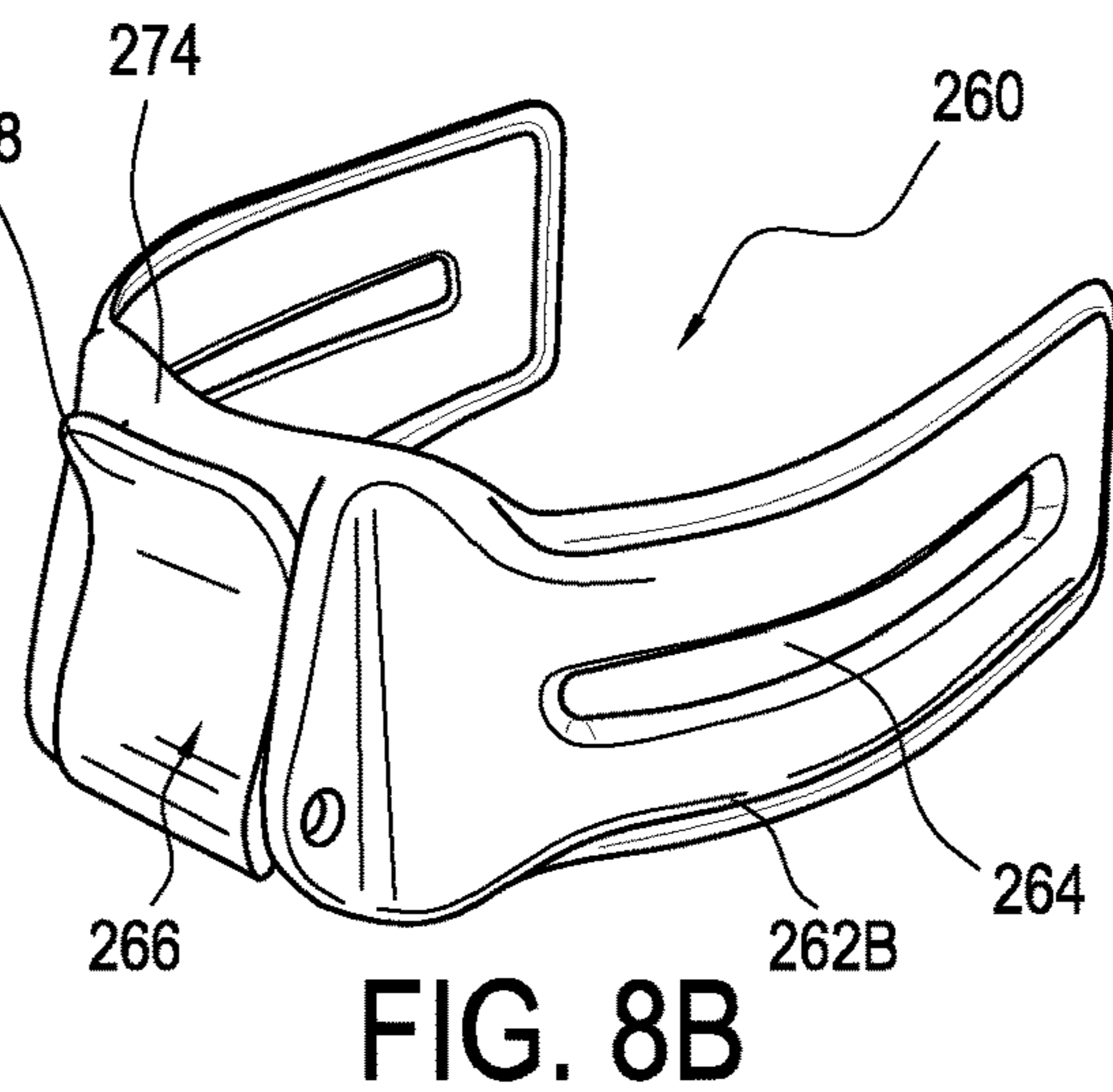
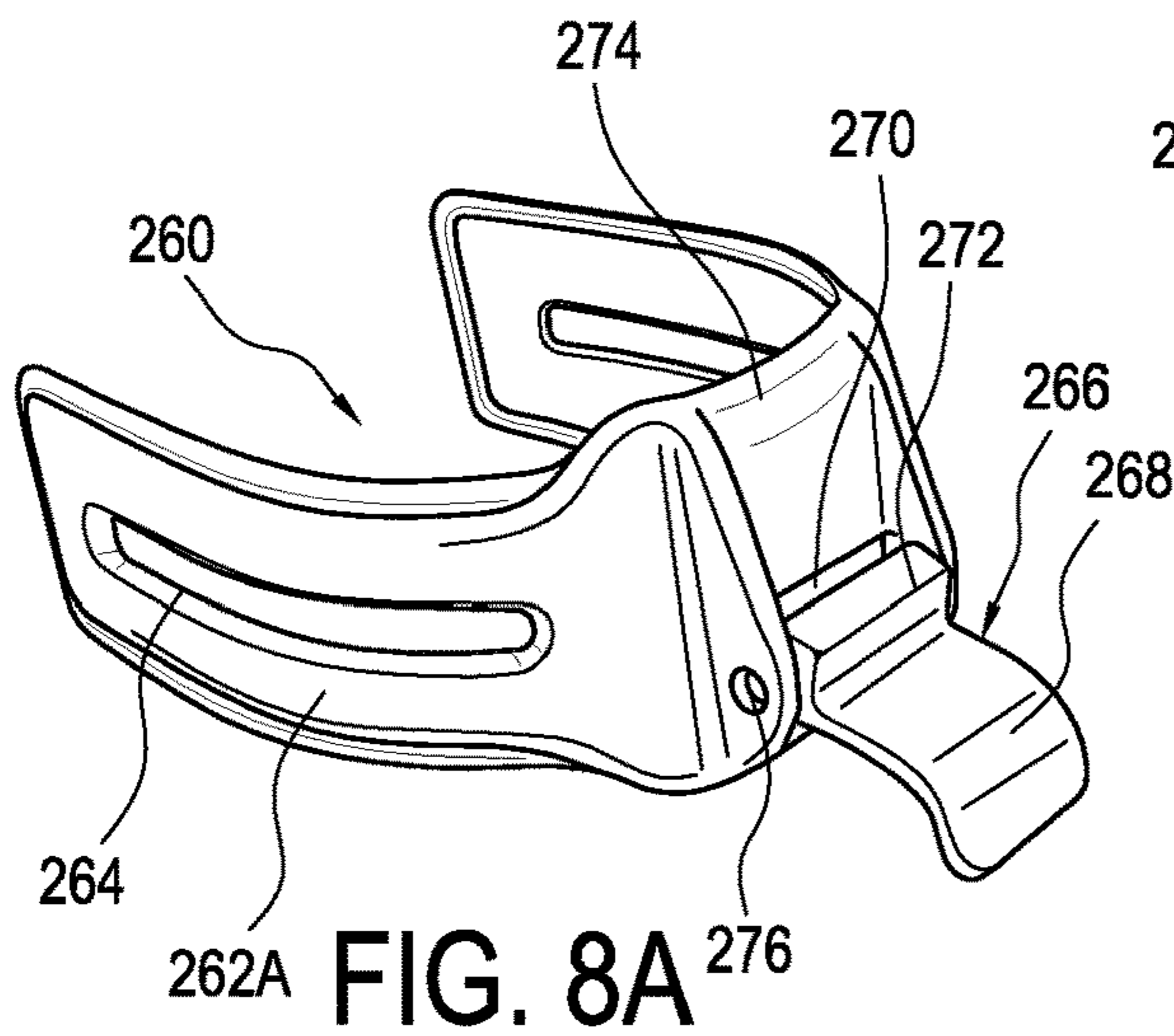


FIG. 6





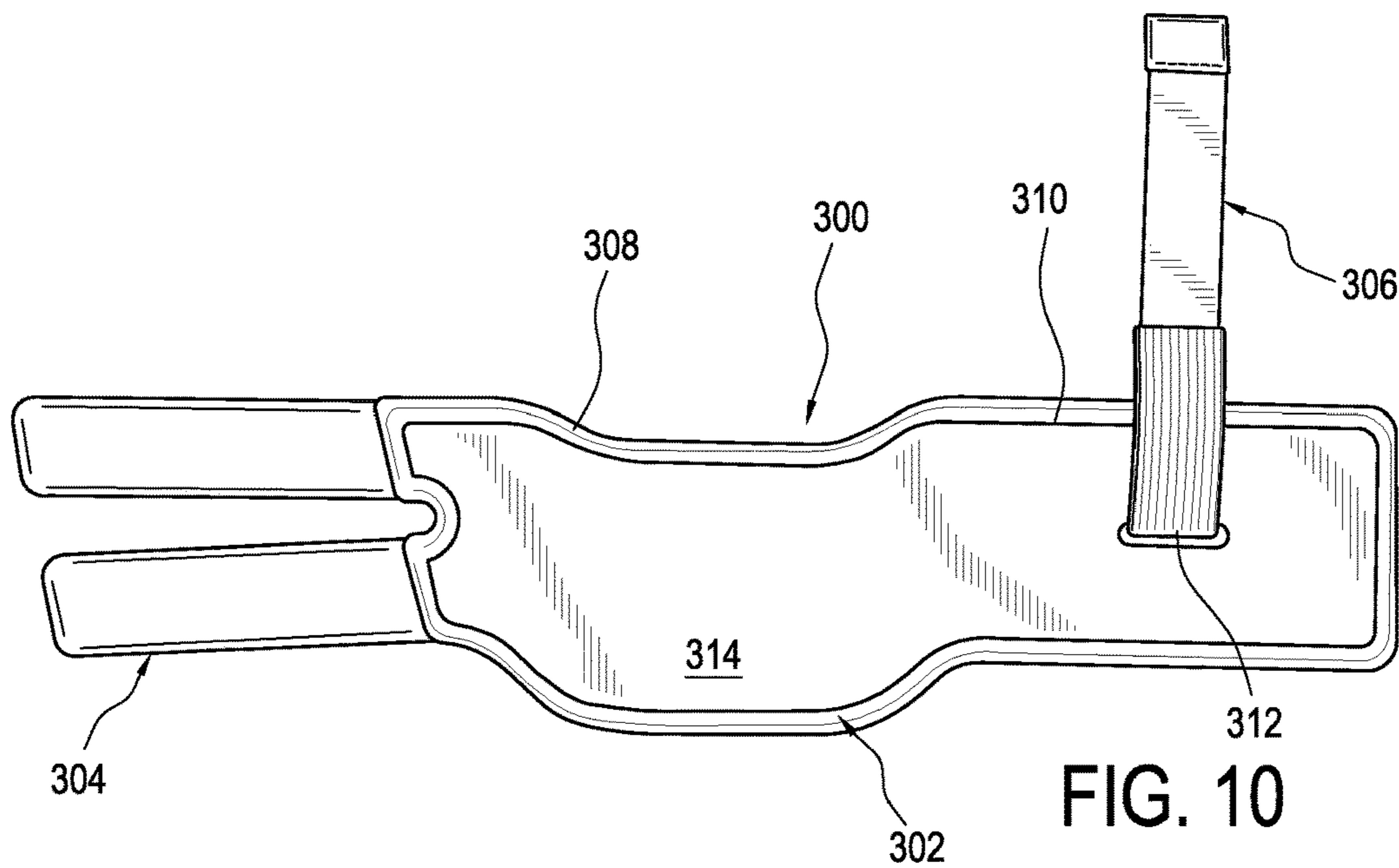


FIG. 10

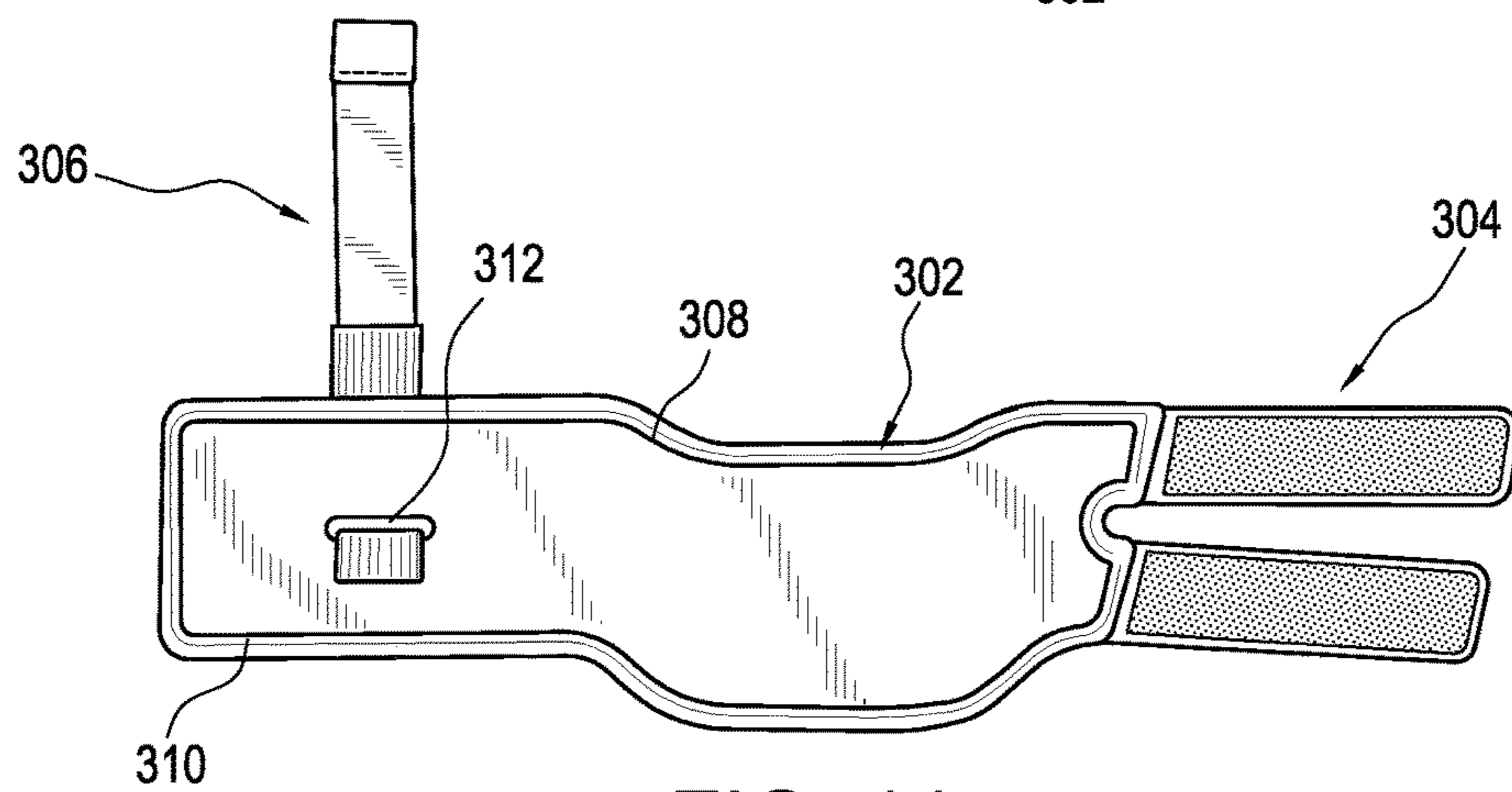


FIG. 11

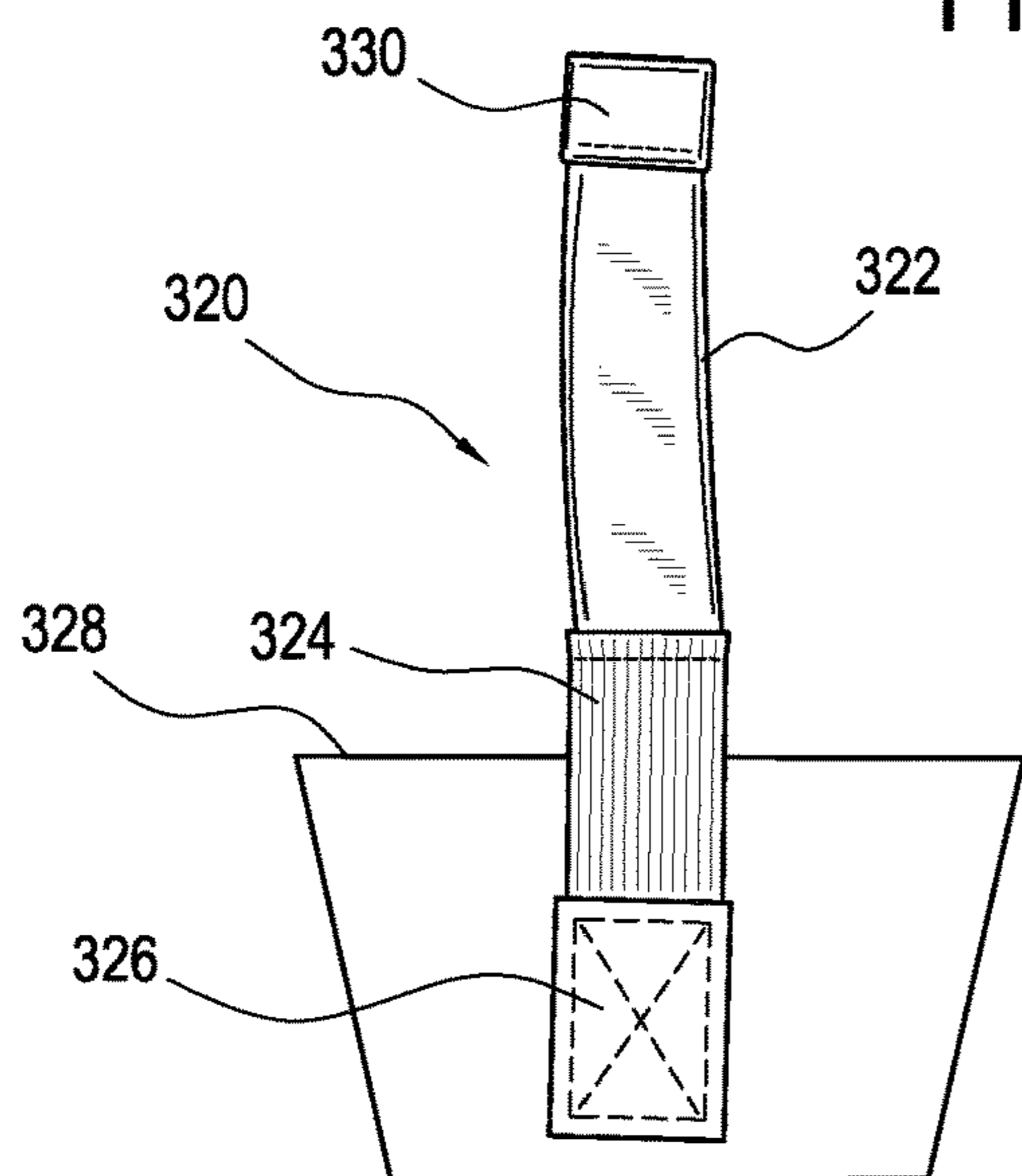


FIG. 12

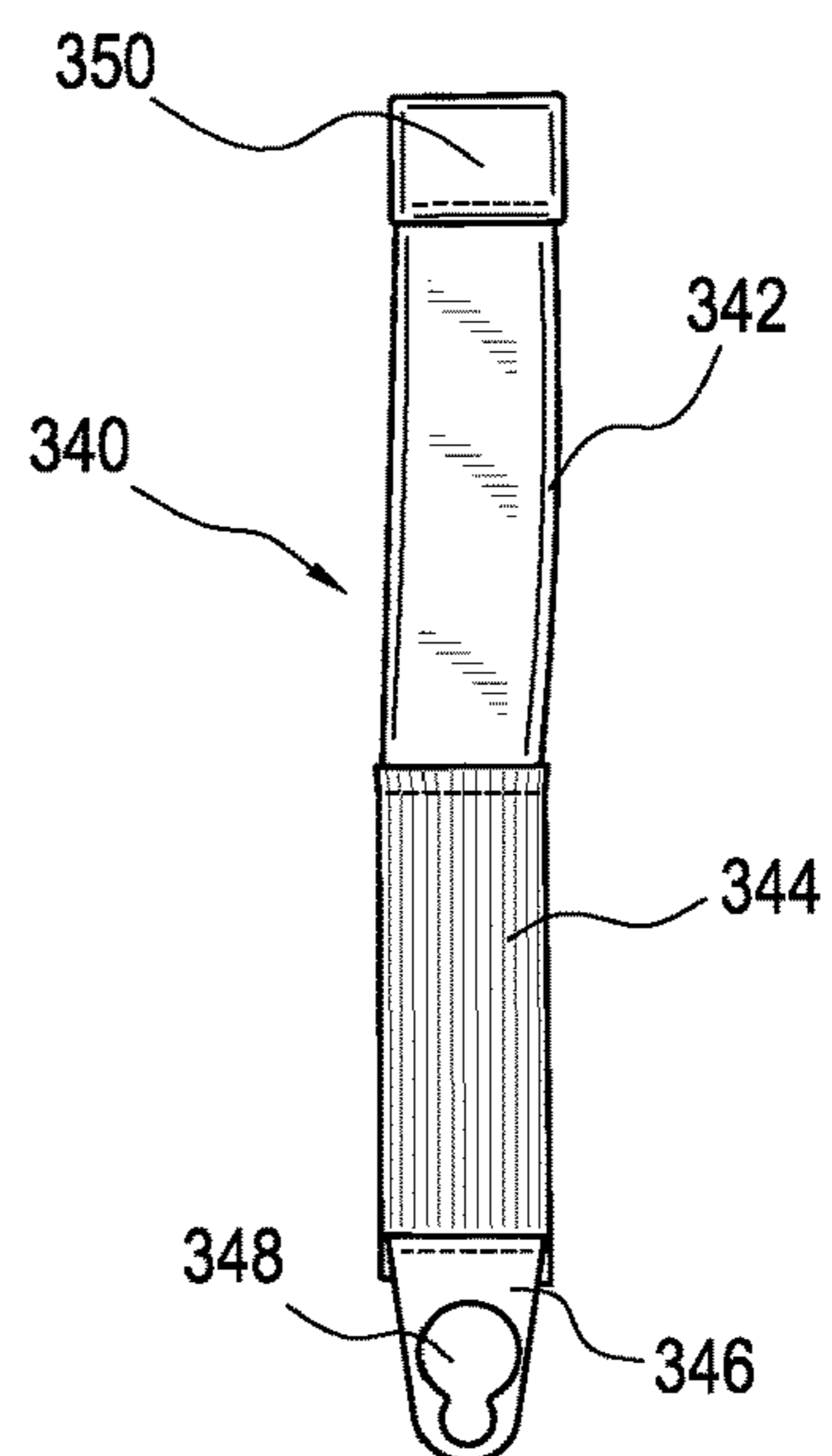


FIG. 13

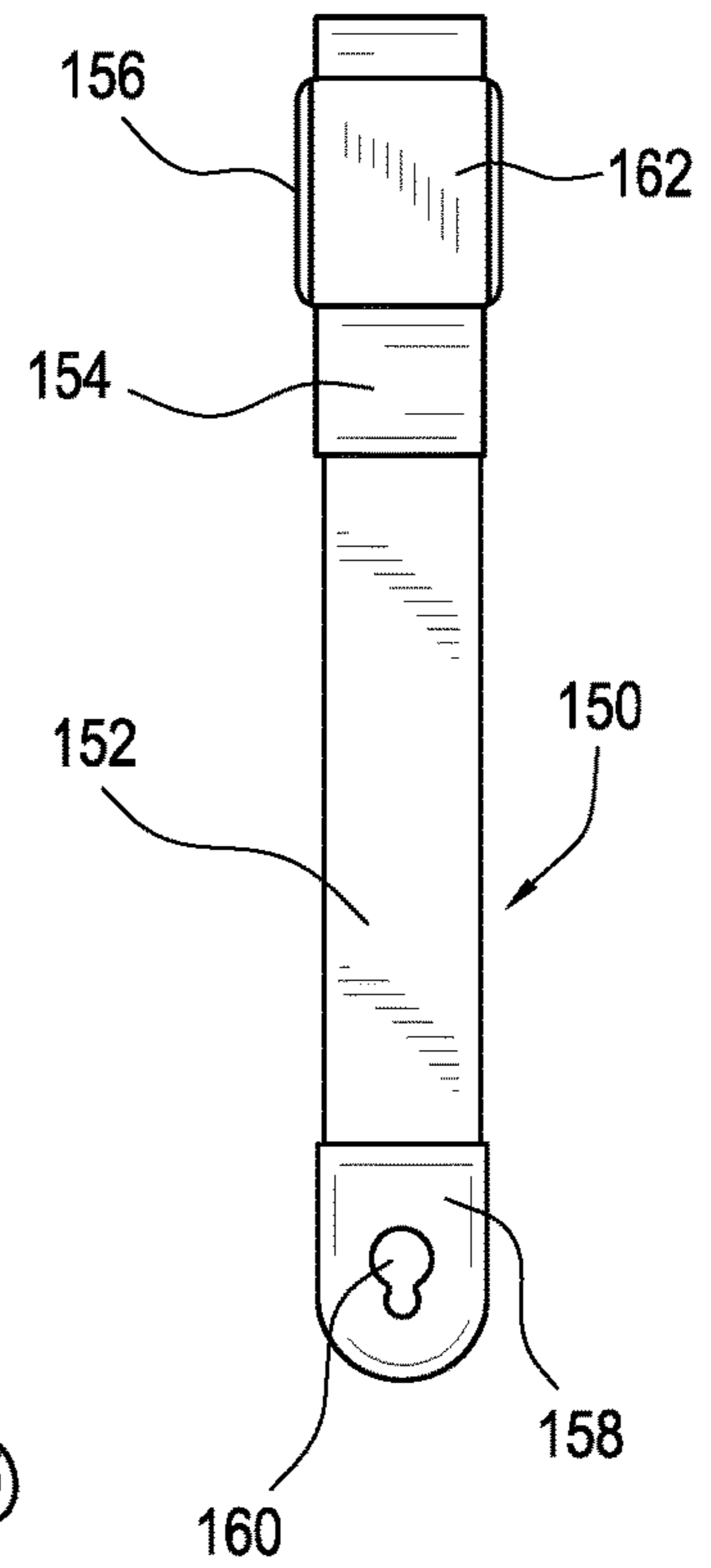
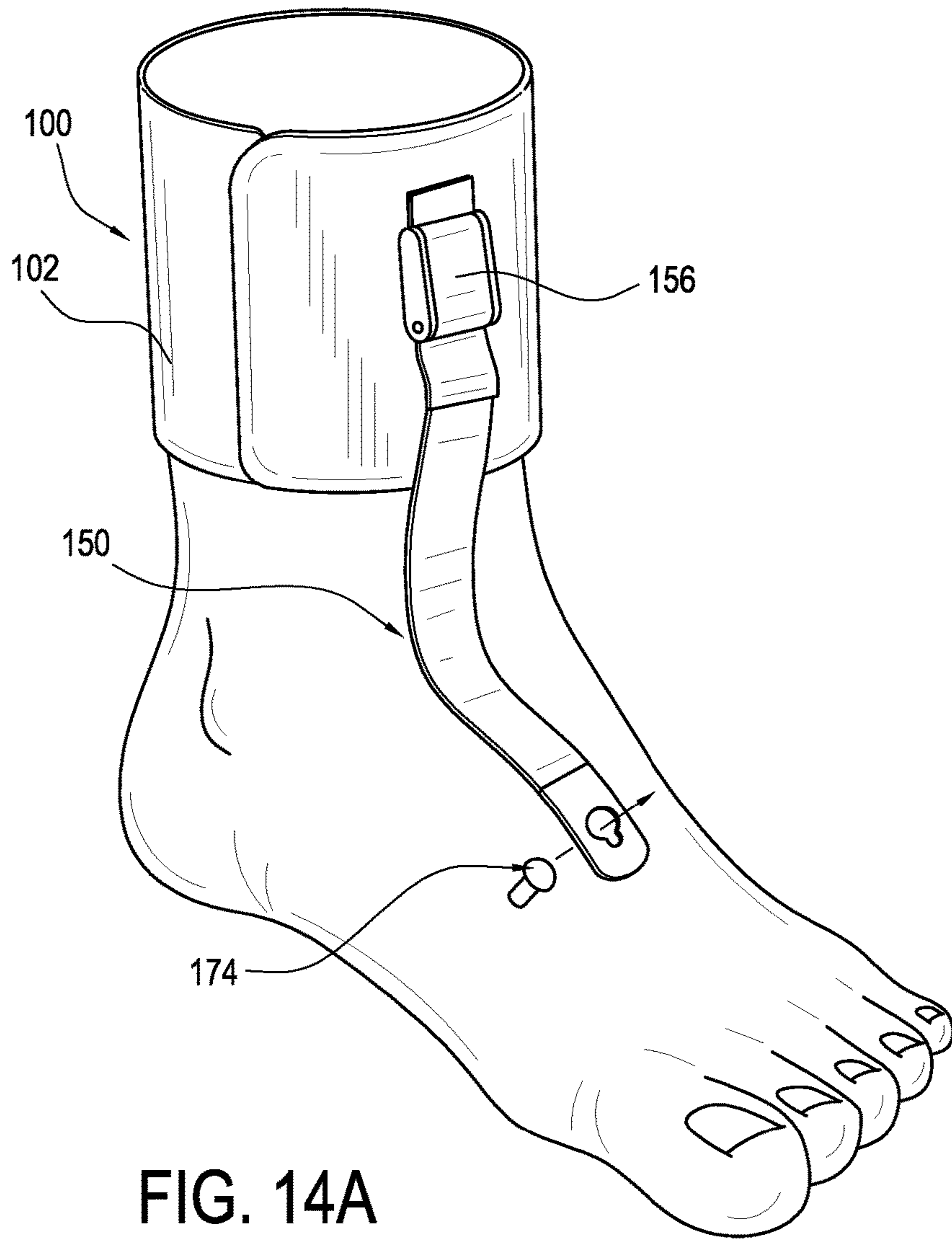
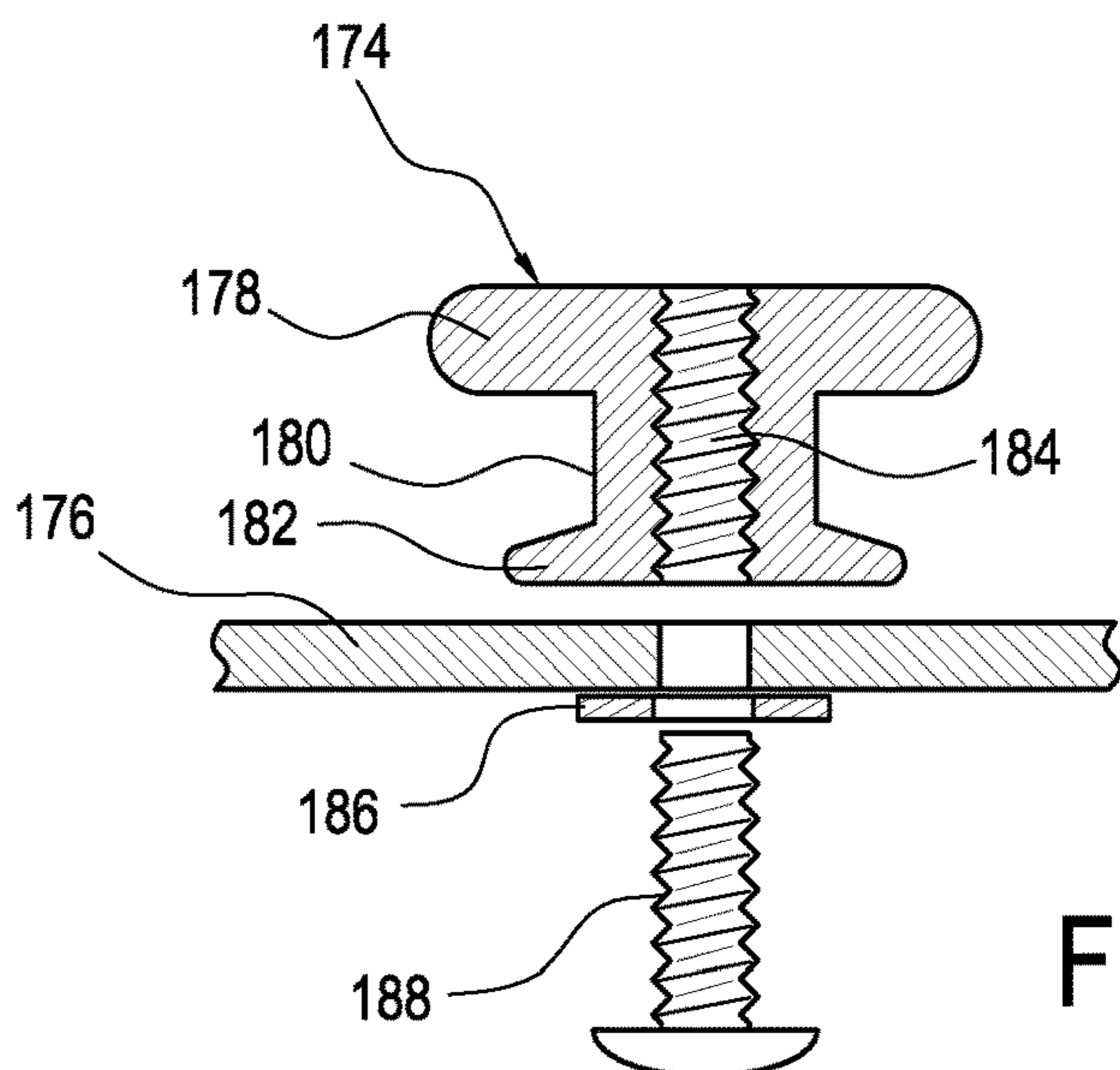
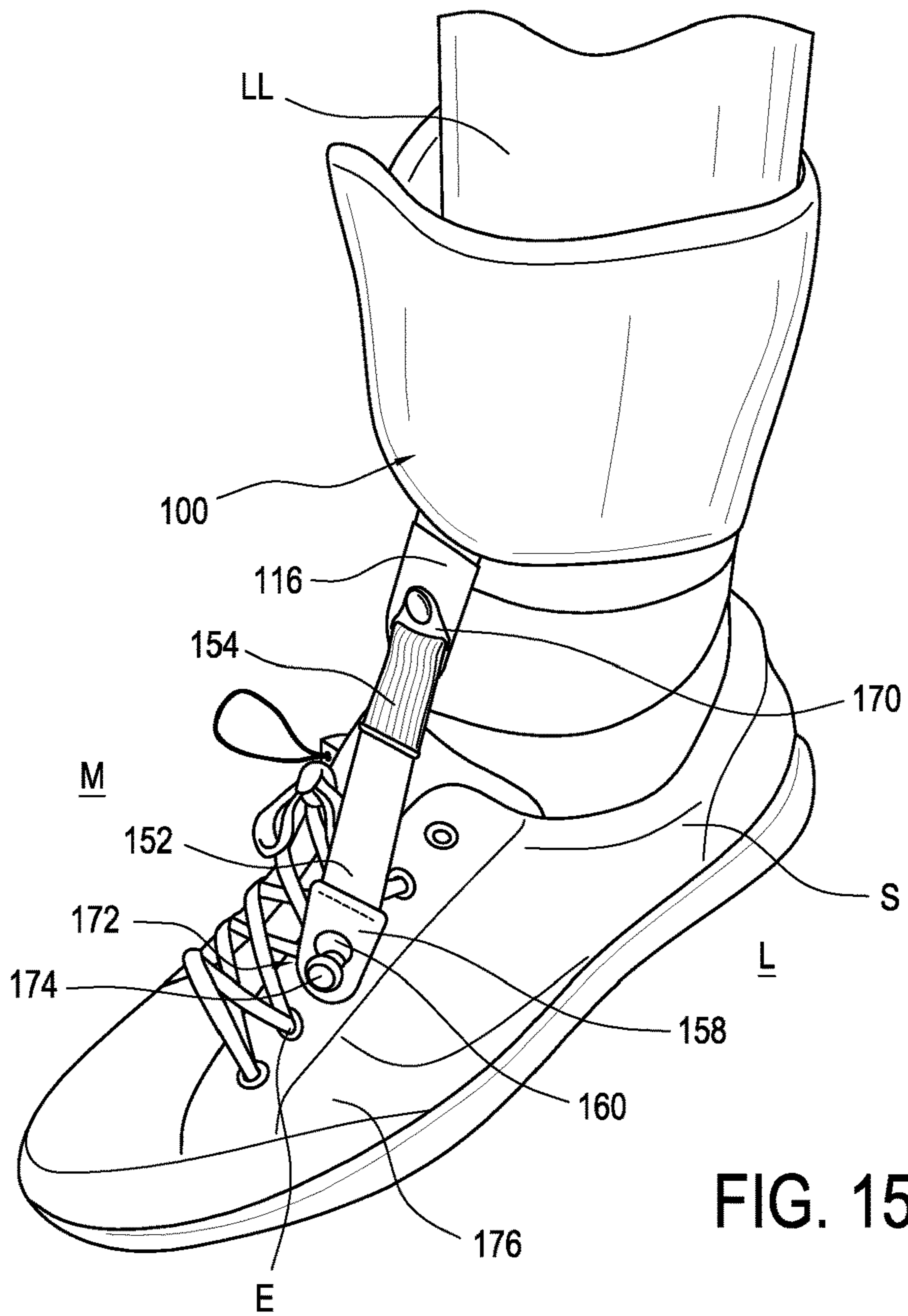


FIG. 14A

FIG. 14B



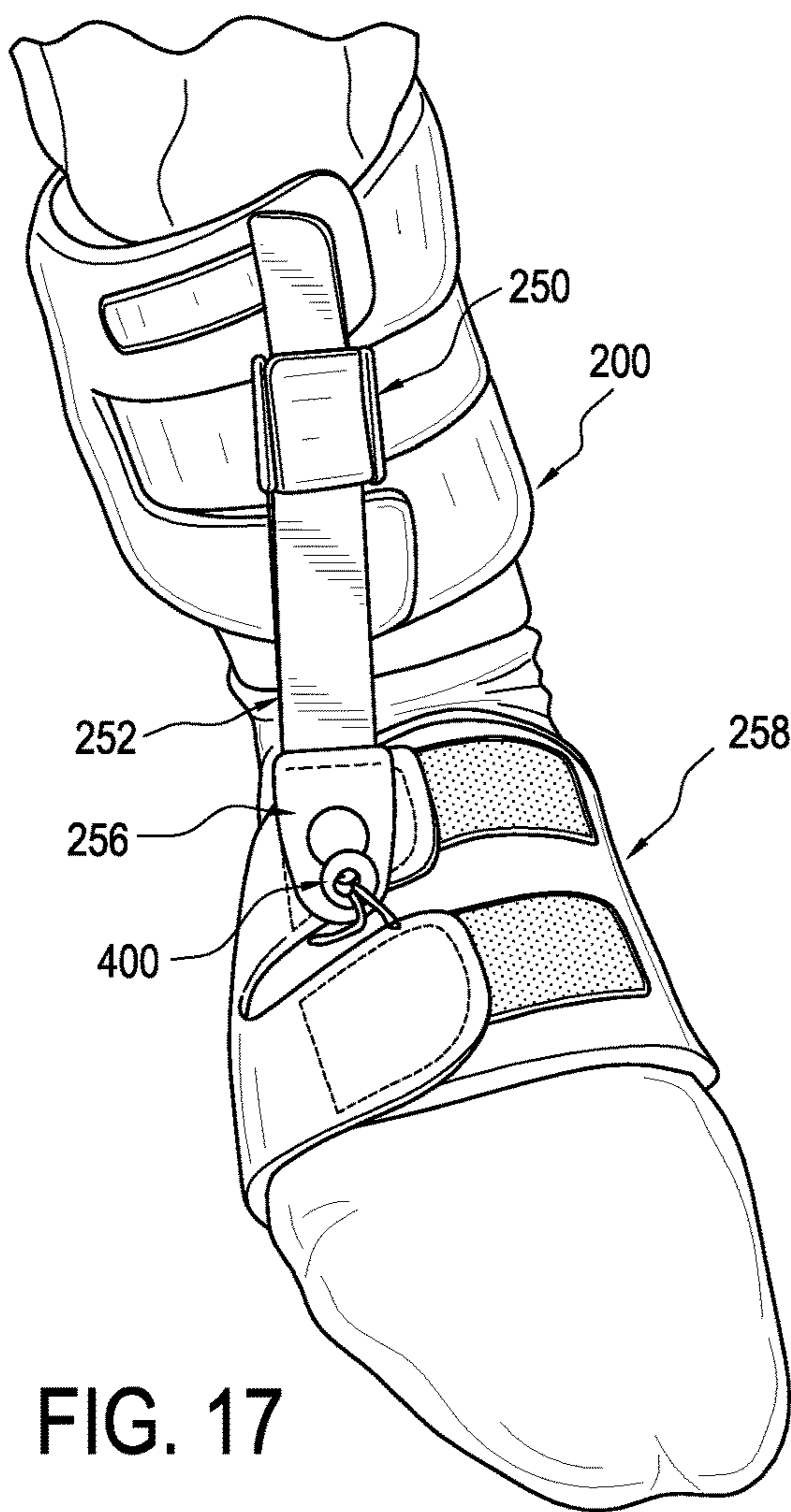


FIG. 17

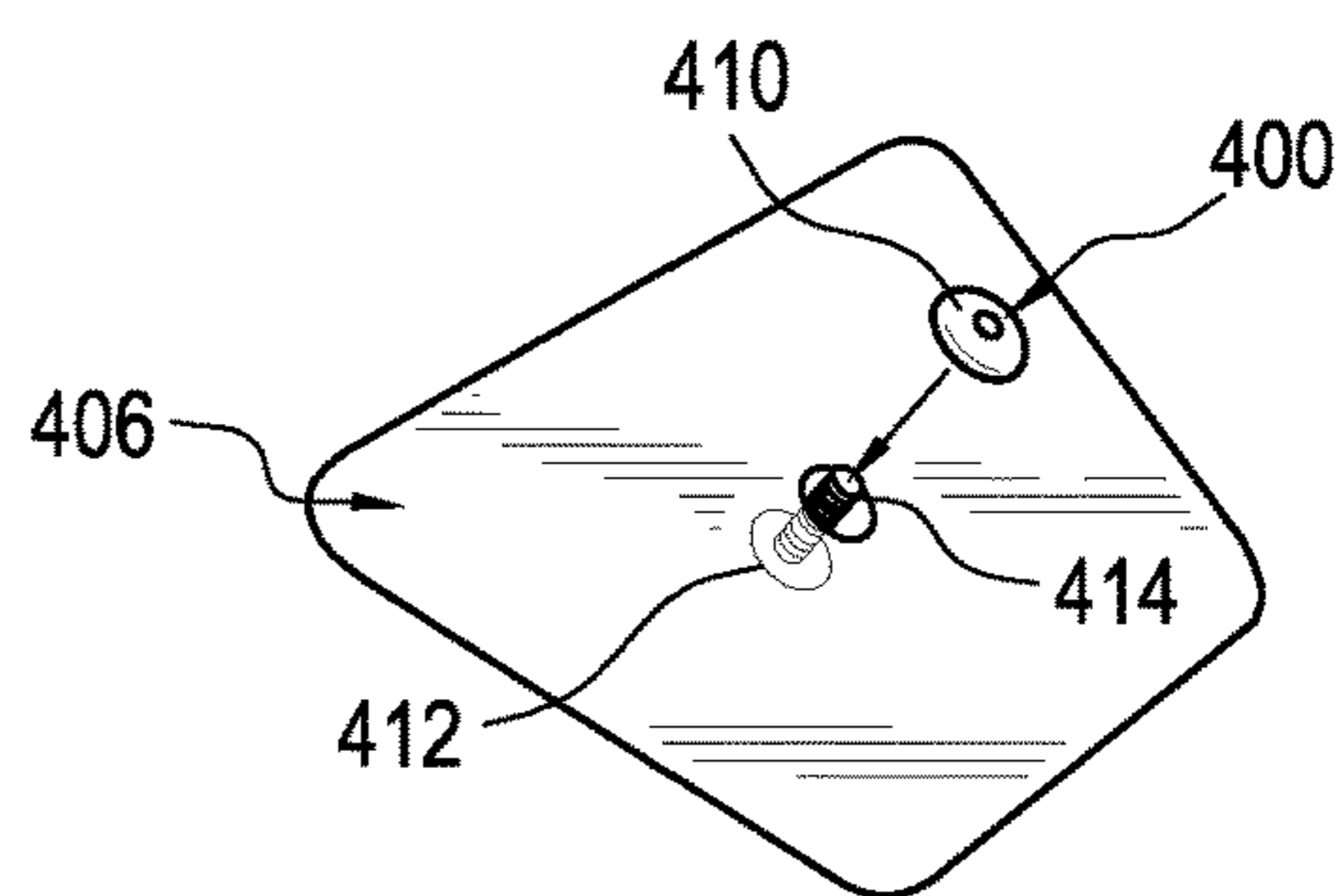


FIG. 19

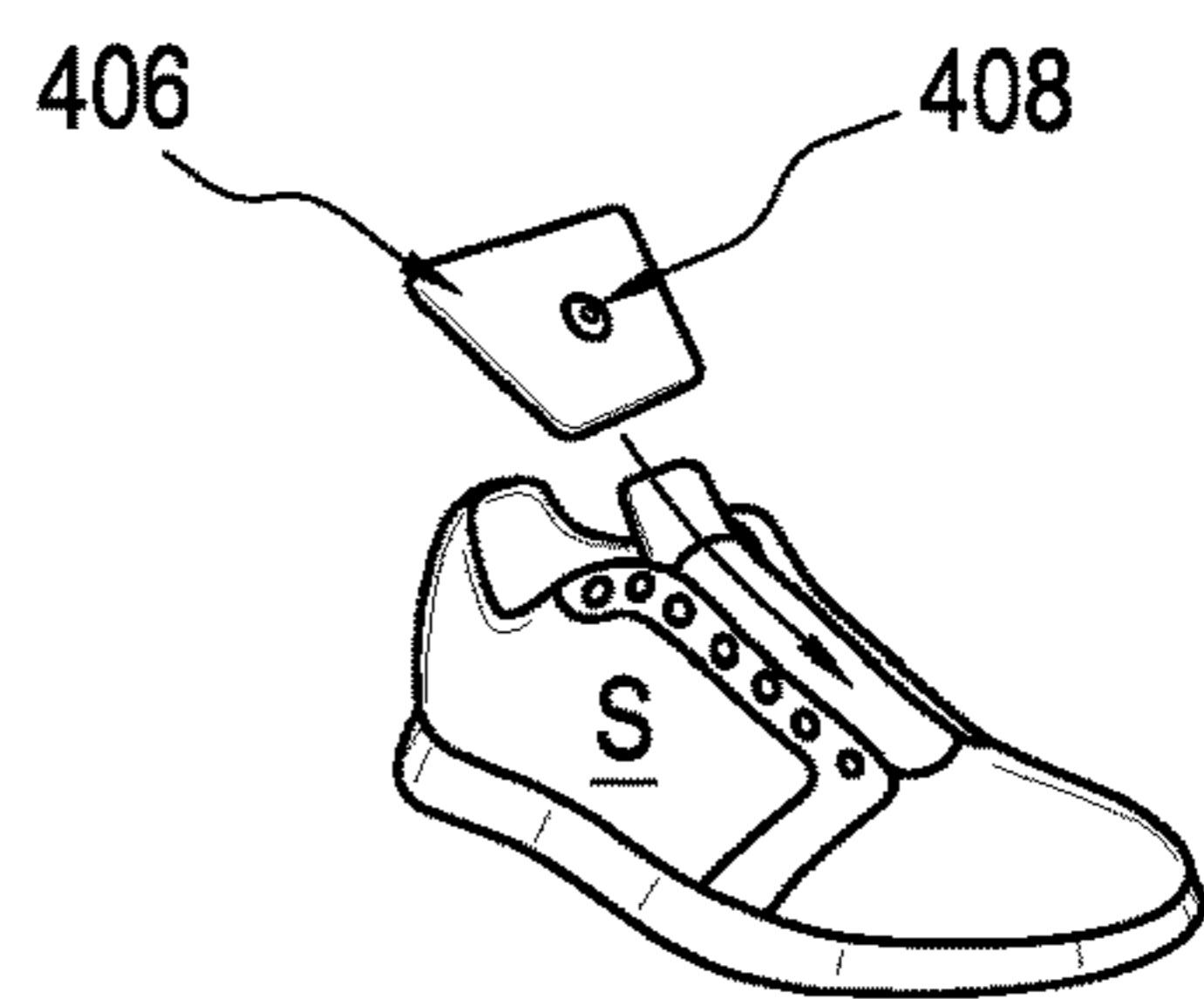


FIG. 20A

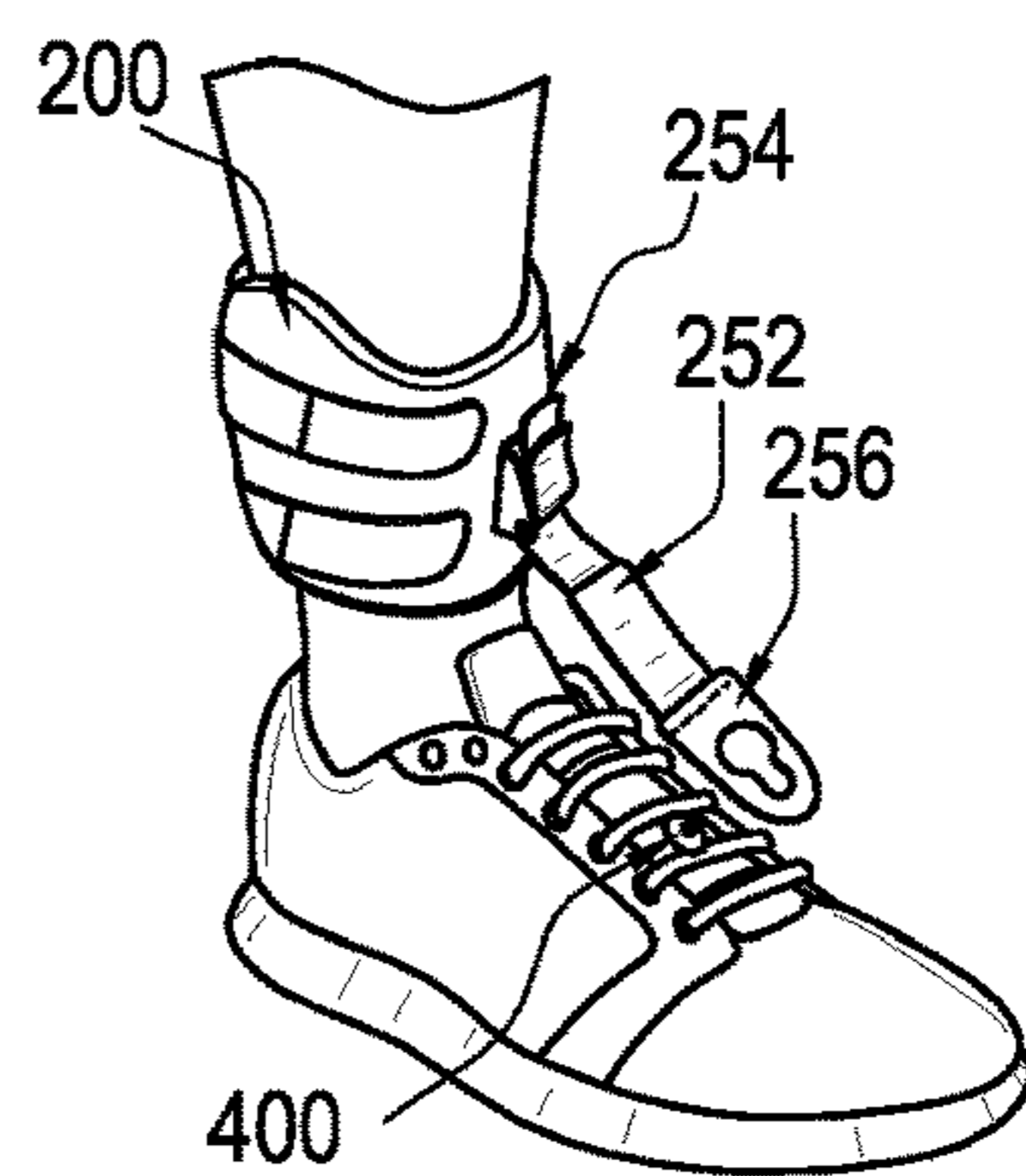


FIG. 20B

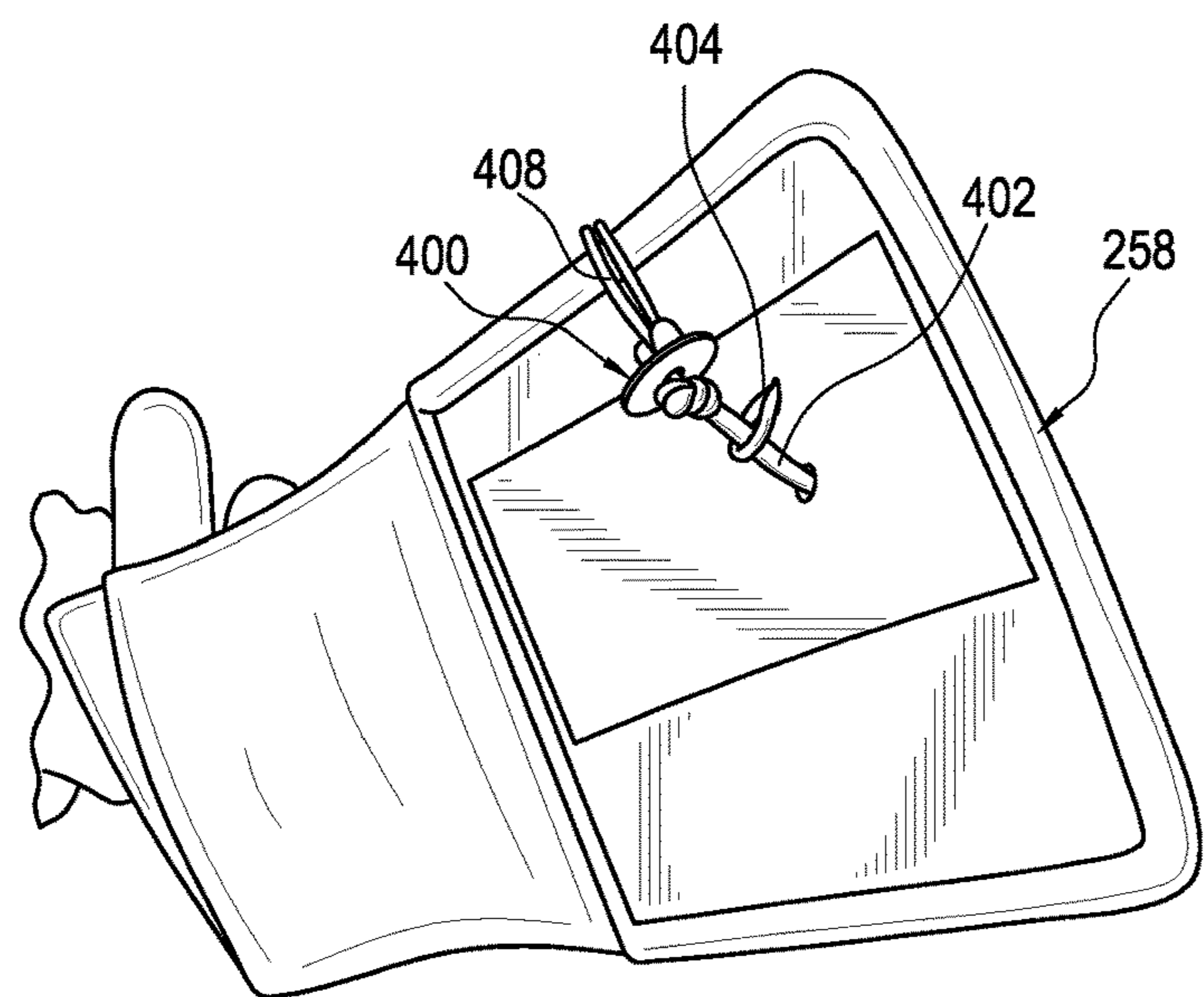


FIG. 18

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**ORTHOPEDIC DEVICE FOR TREATING
DROP FOOT AND METHOD FOR USING
THE SAME**

FIELD OF THE DISCLOSURE

The disclosure relates to an orthopedic device including an assembly for supporting a foot-drop affected foot relative to a lower leg belonging to the foot such that the foot is prevented from dropping down relative to the lower leg when the foot is raised by the lower leg from a supporting surface.

BACKGROUND

Drop foot is a gait abnormality in which the forefoot drops due to weakness, irritation, or damage to the common fibular nerve including the sciatic nerve, or paralysis of the muscles in the anterior portion of the lower leg. Drop foot may be characterized by an inability or impairment to raise the toes or a foot relative to an ankle in dorsiflexion, or inversion or eversion of the foot. The foot hangs with toes pointing down, causing the toes to scrape the ground while walking, and requiring the individual to lift the corresponding leg higher than normal when walking to avoid slapping the foot on the ground. Drop foot is highly pronounced in the part of the gait cycle that involves the most dorsiflexion, such as at heel contact and during the swing phase.

Drop foot may be temporary or permanent depending on muscle weakness or nerve damage or impairment, and most commonly affects one side only although it can affect both sides, either equally or to different degrees.

Drop foot can be caused by nerve damage alone or by muscle or spinal cord trauma, neurological dysfunction, abnormal anatomy, complications relating to surgery (i.e., hip or knee), or disease. Diseases that can cause drop foot include direct hit to posterolateral neck of fibula stroke, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease), muscular dystrophy, Charcot Marie Tooth disease, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, hereditary spastic paraplegia and Friedreich's ataxia.

Ankle-foot orthoses may treat drop foot by controlling the position and motion of the ankle. An ankle-foot orthosis may be constructed from plastic and possess the shape of an "L" with the upright portion behind the calf and the lower portion running underneath the foot. Alternatives may include jointed ankles and may provide different control. These alternative ankle-foot orthoses are often custom formed and are bulky, particularly when worn with clothing and shoes.

In a prior art orthopedic device in FIGS. 1A and 1B, drop foot orthosis 2 is provided with a first attachment member or ankle component 4 for attachment of the drop foot orthosis 2 to the lower leg, a second attachment member or foot component 6 for attachment of the drop foot orthosis 2 to an upper side or instep of a shoe 8 enclosing the foot-drop affected foot, and a strap assembly joining the first and second attachment members 4, 6. The second attachment member 6 is provided with an attachment plate or inlay 7 which, in use, is positioned under the upper part or instep (such as a tongue, shoe lace or edge) of the shoe 8 (see FIG. 1B). The user, when walking, experiences an upward (supporting) force 36 which acts on a point near the tongue 34 of the shoe 8.

This assembly requires careful placement of the plate 7, and is generally limited to shoes having laces. The plate 7 may slide about within the shoe 8 as a user walks, and may

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not offer a stable connection if the shoe laces are not sufficiently tensioned. It may prove cumbersome for attaching and detaching the plate 7, particularly if the plate 7 slides about. It also precludes easy and/or one-handed adjustment.

5 This assembly further fails to offer a user the option to adjust the orthopedic device to provide more or less medial or lateral support, as their specific condition may require. The assembly also makes it difficult to replace the strap, adjust the length of the strap to match an individual's dimensions, or to switch out the strap and plate for a different preferable strap and/or foot component or attachment.

Another problem with this assembly is that it does not allow for voluntary plantar flexion or other articulation by a user during the swing phase or provide dorsiflexion support.

15 This reduces comfort and desirability for long-term use.

Existing strap attachment and adjustment mechanisms are frequently inadequate for holding a strap in position due to undesired slippage of the strap. This is at least in part due to most adjustment mechanisms providing a lever with a flat profile. In these devices, a component of the strap force creates a clearance between the strap attachment mechanism and lever face. Manufacturing variability also affects the ability to properly hold a strap in place without undesired slippage.

25 From the foregoing, there is a need for an orthopedic device that provides improved attachment between ankle and foot components, while offering better medial and/or lateral support and flexibility and ease of use.

SUMMARY

A lightweight orthopedic device serves as an ankle-foot orthosis providing dynamic support for drop foot or related disorders. The orthopedic device assists in gait improvement by providing support the moment the foot is raised by generating an upward, supporting force. The orthopedic device is simple to fit, and is arranged to be generally invisible when worn with or without a shoe.

35 The orthopedic device may include an ergonomic ankle component and a strap assembly arranged to attach to a shoe or a foot component with or without a shoe. The strap assembly attaches to the ankle component and is releasably connected to both the ankle component and the shoe or foot component. An anchor is installable on a shoe and can be located centrally, laterally, or medially on the shoe or foot component. The orthopedic device offers dorsiflexion during swing phase of a user's gait, increases postural stability, and allows for voluntary plantar flexion. Due to its construction, the orthopedic device can be donned and doffed with one hand, and can be worn comfortably, due to the construction of the ankle and foot components, for extended periods of time.

In an embodiment of the orthopedic device, a main support is adapted to secure about a lower leg, a strap assembly has a first portion coupling to the main support, and a second portion is arranged to be drawn therefrom, and an anchor receives and attaches to the second portion of the strap assembly.

A foot component may be provided to secure about the lower leg of a user and the anchor is secured to the foot component. The foot component may define at least two apertures among which the anchor is selectively secured to the foot component. The foot component may include at least two straps extending from a main portion of the foot component, and the at least two straps define a clearance therebetween and over the main portion at which the anchor is secured.

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The strap assembly may be releasably attached to the anchor and adjustable in length at the first portion relative to the main support. An attachment component may be secured to the main support such that the first portion of the strap assembly couples to the attachment component. The attachment component comprises a lever device arranged to grasp the first portion of the strap assembly.

An end of the first portion may define a tab extending from a first end of the attachment component, and the first portion extends through the attachment component and from a second end of the attachment component towards the anchor.

The strap assembly preferably includes a main segment and at least one elastic segment attached to the main segment. The main segment can be substantially less elastic than the at least one elastic segment, or simply inelastic relative to the at least one elastic segment. The at least one elastic segment may include at least two elastic segments parallel and generally coextensive with one another. The main segment may have a first end from which a tab extends and a second end at which a first end of the at least one elastic segment secures.

A second end of the at least one elastic segment preferably carries a coupling part securable to the anchor. The coupling part may define a keyhole adapted to receive a head of the anchor and lockingly engage a shaft extending from the head due to bias of the at least one elastic segment pulling the coupling part toward the leg support.

The main support preferably defines a curved shape arranged as semi-rigid or rigid to resiliently maintain its shape between donning and doffing.

In an exemplary method for donning an orthopedic device, steps may include securing a main support about a lower leg; coupling a first portion of a strap assembly to the main support; and extending and securing a second portion of the strap assembly to an anchor. The anchor may be configured to be adjustable relative to a neutral strap assembly orientation, such that the strap assembly extends at a non-parallel angle between the main support and the anchor relative to the neutral orientation. The anchor may be securable to a foot component which is securable to a foot. The length of the strap assembly may be adjusted between the main support and the anchor by adjusting the first portion of the strap assembly relative to the main support.

These and other features, aspects, and advantages of the present disclosure will become better understood regarding the following description, appended claims, and accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1A is a schematic perspective representation of a prior art orthopedic device arranged for treating drop foot.

FIG. 1B is a schematic perspective side view of the prior art device of FIG. 1A placed on a foot and ankle of a person in combination with a shoe.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of an ankle component of an embodiment of the orthopedic device in a curved, contoured configuration.

FIG. 3 is a plan view of the ankle component of FIG. 2 in a flat, non-contoured configuration.

FIG. 4 is a plan view of another ankle component embodiment of an orthopedic device in a flat, non-contoured configuration showing an outer side.

FIG. 5 is a plan view of the ankle component of FIG. 4 showing an inner side.

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FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view taken along line VI-VI of the ankle component of FIG. 5.

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of an orthopedic device including the ankle component of FIG. 4 secured to the ankle and foot of a user.

FIG. 8A is a perspective view of an embodiment of an attachment component in the ankle component of FIG. 7 showing a lever in an unsecured setting.

FIG. 8B is another perspective view of the attachment component of FIG. 8A in a secured setting.

FIG. 9A is a perspective view of another embodiment of an attachment component.

FIG. 9B is a front elevational view of the attachment component in FIG. 9A.

FIG. 9C is a side elevational view of the attachment component in FIG. 9A.

FIG. 9D is a side elevational view of an embodiment of an attachment component.

FIG. 10 is a plan view of another embodiment of an ankle component in a flat, non-contoured configuration showing an outer side.

FIG. 11 is a plan view of the ankle component of FIG. 10 showing an inner side.

FIG. 12 is a plan view showing an embodiment of a strap assembly for use with the ankle component of FIG. 10.

FIG. 13 is a plan view showing another embodiment of a strap assembly for use with the ankle component of FIG. 10.

FIG. 14A is a perspective view of the ankle component of FIG. 2 placed on an ankle of a user and a strap assembly attached thereto.

FIG. 14B is an elevational view of the strap assembly in FIG. 14A.

FIG. 15 is a schematic view of the orthopedic device on an ankle and shoe of a user.

FIG. 16 is a schematic view of an anchor assembly in FIG. 15 for coupling to a shoe.

FIG. 17 is a schematic perspective view of a variation of the orthopedic device of FIG. 7 secured to the ankle and foot of a user.

FIG. 18 is a partial perspective view of the foot component of FIG. 17.

FIG. 19 is a perspective view of an inlay assembly for securing to a shoe.

FIGS. 20A and 20B are a schematic view of steps for securing the inlay assembly into a shoe.

The drawing figures are not drawn to scale, but instead are drawn to provide a better understanding of the components, and are not intended to be limiting in scope, but to provide exemplary illustrations.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF VARIOUS EMBODIMENTS OF THE DISCLOSURE

The orthopedic device embodiments disclosed herein are improvements over the prior art orthopedic device in a drop foot orthosis in FIGS. 1A and 1B.

FIG. 2 shows an exemplary ankle component 100 in an embodiment drop foot or ankle-foot orthosis. The ankle component 100 includes a main support 102, a supplementary support 104 and at least one strap, for example first and second straps 108, 110 depending from the main support 102 and retained by the supplementary support 104. The main support 102 is adapted to extend about the lower leg such as the anterior ankle or shin of the user above the foot. The supplementary support 104 may be slidable along the at least one strap 108, 110, and tensionable along the lower leg, such as at the posterior ankle. The at least one strap 108, 110 is

adapted to extend circumferentially about the lower leg in combination with the main support 102.

The at least one strap 108, 110 is advantageous in that main support 102 may be formed from a foam laminated Nylon/spandex with loop material, and the at least one strap 108, 110 preferably having hook material is not limited to where they are secured on the main support 102. The at least one strap 108, 110 may be formed similarly to the main support 102 so that if necessary, the hook of the at least one strap 108, 110 can secure to an opposite surface defining loop material.

The main support 102 may be adapted to form a curved shape, such as a U-shape. The U-shape is arranged to be clamped to the ankle to enable one-handed donning. The ankle component 100 may be semi-rigid or rigid, and particularly arranged as being resilient to generally maintain its curved shape over repeated donning.

The main support 102 may be contourable to adapt to the anatomy of a user, as in the shape of the anterior ankle or shin. The main support 102 may include malleable aluminum or other suitable materials and stay elements for facilitating bending and adapting to an individual anatomy but sufficiently strong to hold its contoured shape. In this example, a center portion 118 may comprise the malleable material. The center portion 118 may comprise injection molded plastic preformed to impart the curvature to the main support 102. The center portion 118 may be resilient and conform to the shape of the user's lower leg upon tightening of the at least one strap 108, 110.

Referring to FIGS. 2 and 3, the main support 102 includes a frame portion 106 adapted to preferably extend generously about the lower ankle for securely holding into position on the lower leg and preventing migration on the lower leg. The main support 102 includes a strap attachment 112 for a coupling strap connecting to a shoe, defined in more detail in FIGS. 4A-4B. The strap attachment 112 may include a strap loop 114, or a buckle 116 or both for coupling to the coupling strap. The strap attachment 112 attachment is preferably centrally located on the main support 102, particularly at the apex of the curved shape.

The main support 102 preferably includes panels 126 which are hook-receivable for engagement with the straps 108, 110. The main support 102 may have edging 124 located about its periphery for providing a relaxed fit and distributing pressure about the lower leg of the user. The edging 124 may comprise a softer material than material forming the frame portion 106.

The supplementary support 104 preferably defines channels 120 through which the straps 108, 110 may extend from attachment slots 122 defined by the main support 102 upon which first ends of the straps 108, 110 secure. Second ends of the straps 108, 110 are securable to the panels 126. The supplementary support 104 may comprise a pad for placement over the Achilles heel. Preferably, the supplementary support 104 comprises EVA or open-cell foam, and the channels 120 are formed by fabric sewn or otherwise secured to the foam.

The straps 108, 110 are preferably formed from back to back velours to provide a soft and comfortable fit for the user. The second ends of the straps 108, 110 may comprise ultrasonic welding lines 128 for ease in trimming to length and adapting to the shape of the user's lower leg. The second ends of the straps 108, 110 may also include hook material for securing to the panels 126.

Turning to the embodiment of FIGS. 4-6, the ankle component 200 includes a main support 202 and a supplementary support 204 extending from the main support 202.

At least one strap 206 extends from the main support 202, and may comprise multiple straps, as shown. As the device is donned, the main support 202, having a curved shape as previously described, forms around the ankle and stays in place relatively stable. As the at least one strap 206 is wrapped around the ankle to attach to the main support 202, and the supplementary support 204 is secured to the ankle between the at least one strap 206 and the skin. The main support 202 defines a debossed or recessed section 208 adapted to receive a strap attachment device (as better shown in FIGS. 7-8B).

The ankle component 200 has padded sections spaced apart by non-padded sections. The main support 202 includes pads whereby first and second side pads 214A, 214B spaced apart by a central pad 220 generally aligned with a central notched portion 234 of the main support 202 defined along its upper edge. The central notched portion 234 is configured and dimensioned to generally accommodate a user's shin or tibia, along with the central pad 220 which is adapted to align with a user's tibia. The first and second side pads 214A, 214B are arranged to firmly embrace side portions, of at least an anterior side of the lower leg, when the ankle component 200 is wrapped about the user's leg.

The pads are spaced apart by welded areas 222 defined as thinner regions of the main component as compared to the pads, whereby the foam or other compressible material forming the pads is reduced or compressed in the welded areas 222. Notches 226 may be formed along the welded areas 222 to provided better conformability of the ankle component 200 to a user's leg. The welded areas 222 define edge portions 236 generally devoid of padding material for close fitting about the periphery of the ankle component 200 on the leg of the user. The supplemental support 204 likewise includes a plurality of pads 217 generally arranged in a series. In variations of the ankle component 200, any of the pads or padding areas may be removed and/or the layers forming the ankle component 200 may have padding properties.

As exemplified in FIG. 5, traction elements 216 may be provided over at least the pads 217 for preventing migration on the leg of the user, particularly in combination with the at least one strap 206 when it is tensioned about the leg of the user. The traction elements 216 may be formed by silicone or other suitable material providing sufficient traction against skin or clothing of a user, and be arranged in a pattern to enhance migration control while enabling suitable comfort and breathability for the ankle component 200. The traction elements 216 may be glued or applied directly to the surface of the liner 224, and integrated therewith to remain on the ankle component 200 due to repeated donning and doffing, and wearing of the ankle component 200.

FIG. 6 exemplifies a cross-section of the ankle component 200, and the material layers preferably used to construct the ankle component 200 according to the embodiments of FIGS. 4 and 5. Specifically, a soft and breathable fabric-based outer liner 210 is used on the outer side of the of the ankle component 200, and may be formed by a hook-receivable material such as a velours. In this embodiment, an open cell foam 228 is preferably used as a padding layer between the outer liner 210, and a soft and breathable fabric-based inner liner 224. The padding areas 214A, 214B, 216, 220, are spaced apart from one another by the welded areas 222, inclusive of notches 226 formed between certain padding areas 214A, 214B, 216. An outer side of the supplementary support 204 comprises additional padding material 212.

The at least one strap **206** may comprise inner and outer layers **230**, **232**, whereby the inner layer **230** may include hook material adapted to securing interconnect with the hook-receivable material of the outer liner **210**. The outer layer **232** may comprise soft, breathable material, or may comprise the combination of the inner and outer liners **210**, **224** with the inner layer **230** bearing the hook material thereon. If there are two straps, as shown in FIG. 4, the straps **206** are separated by a distance defined by a height of the debossed section **208** so that the straps **206** secure above and below an attachment component, as discussed referring to FIG. 7, and can engage with the outer liner **210**.

By way of the arrangement of the liners and padding, and the further configuration of the padding areas, the ankle component enables enhanced conformability to different users' anatomy. The liner construction is low profile in part due to the welded areas, thereby reducing material thickness in areas where it is less required or minimizing padding. The welded areas further contribute to improved conformability by the notches which may be formed from thermoforming involving compressed areas of the padding. Thermoforming can also arrange the pattern of the pads into more ergonomic arrangements better accommodating an ankle than a foam layer having a single thickness generally across the entire ankle component.

FIG. 7 shows the ankle component **200** of FIG. 4 with an attachment component **250** coupling to a strap assembly **252** connected to a foot component **258**. The attachment component **250** includes a lever device **254** that serves as a buckle for grasping a first portion of the strap assembly **252** and maintaining a length of the strap assembly **252** extending therefrom. A coupling part **256** extends from a second portion of the strap assembly **252**, preferably at a second end thereof. As discussed in following embodiments, the strap assembly **252** may have a pull tab **253** for adjusting the strap assembly **252** relative to the lever device **254**.

Advantageously, the foot component **258** defines a plurality of apertures **261A**, **261B**, **261C** to allow for the attachment component **250** to be arranged for enhanced medial or lateral control, and thereby place the anchor and strap assembly **252** in an offset orientation relative to a neutral orientation. An anchor **251**, which may resemble the anchor **174** in FIG. 16, may be selectively attached the foot component **258** via any of the apertures **261A**, **261B**, **261C** formed by the foot component **258**, and the coupling part **256** may couple to anchor **174**, as disclosed in other embodiments disclosed herein or by other known means.

As exemplified in FIG. 7, the strap assembly **252** may be orientated at an angle relative to a center of a leg. The first or center aperture **261A**, may correspond to neutral orientation or central control to offer dynamic support for drop foot or other related disorders that require dorsiflexion. In the orientation **252A** of the strap assembly, the support to the foot and ankle is neutral. A second aperture **261B** may be on either the lateral or medial side of the foot and relative to the first or center aperture **261A** for increased lateral or medial control. In this manner, the orientation **252B** of the strap assembly is offset to the neutral orientation and offers more stability on the prescribed side of the foot upon which the aperture is located, or in other words the side of the center aperture **261A** at which the second aperture **261B** is located. The third aperture **261C** is preferably on an opposite side of the center aperture **261A** than the second aperture **261B**, and offers enhanced support from that side of the foot with the orientation **252C** of the strap assembly.

The foot component **258** is preferably a wrap including a body portion **257** including at least one strap **259A**, **259B**

extending from the body portion **257**. As shown, there are two straps **259A**, **259B** that are spaced apart from one another to create a clearance therebetween which exposes the apertures **261A**, **261B**, **261C** formed through the body portion **257**, so that the straps **259A**, **259B** can be adjusted without interfering or covering the apertures **261A**, **261B**, **261C**. The foot component **258** preferably forms a tubular structure that can be comfortably and flexibly applied about a foot. The at least one strap **259A**, **259B** and the body portion **257** may be arranged similarly as the main support **102** whereby the at least one strap **259A**, **259B** is readily secured over the entirety of the surface of the main support **102**. The interior portion **265** may define indicia **263** illustrating directions and locations for orienting and applying the foot component **258** about the foot of a wearer, to make the foot component more intuitive for donning.

The foot component **258** may be formed from a foam laminated with nylon/spandex and loop. The foot component **258** can be wearable under clothing, and has an anatomical shape to fit most walking shoes. As described below regarding FIG. 15, a footwear or shoe **S** alone may qualify as a foot component itself with the anchor being selectively located and secured on the footwear.

FIGS. 8A and 8B depict an embodiment of an attachment component **260**. The attachment component **260** includes lateral wings **262A**, **262B** that extend laterally from a lever **266**. The lateral wings **262A**, **262B** each define an elongate slot **264** arranged for enabling better flexibility and breathability of the wings. The lever **266** is arranged to bias against a base **274** of the attachment component **260**, with preferably a strap assembly located therebetween (as shown in FIG. 7). The lever **266** and the base **274** define a channel **270** located therebetween in which a wedge **272** of the lever **266** can be urged against the strap assembly to maintain a length of the strap assembly extending from the attachment component. As shown, the lever **266** is pivotally secured to the base **274** by pins **276** and comprises handle **268**.

FIGS. 9A-9C exemplify another attachment component in the form of a buckle **280** attached directly to the ankle component **200** and the strap assembly **252**. Specifically, the buckle **280** includes a frame **282** and a lever **284** pivotally attached to the frame **282** by pins **290**. The lever **284** and biased thereagainst by a spring **286** within an opening **288** formed by the frame **282**. The spring **286** attaches at a first end to a bar **296** of the frame **282**, and to the spring **286** at a second end. In a biased position, teeth **294** formed by or included on the lever **284** are urged against a biasing surface **292** formed by the frame **282** for clamping the strap assembly and maintaining in length.

In an embodiment depicted in FIG. 9D, lever **284** comprises a logarithmic curve profile **273** at a periphery of wedge **272**. The logarithmic curve profile **273** improves upon existing strap attachment and adjustment devices which generally comprise levers having flat profiles. The logarithmic curve profile **273** mitigates the problem of strap force components creating a clearance between the base **282** and the lever **284**, which leads to unwanted slippage of the strap. The problem is mitigated by the logarithmic curve profile **273** of the lever **284** providing an improved force profile relative to the strap assembly **252**, advantageously reducing slippage. In a preferred embodiment, lever **284** cooperates with sloped portion **295** and teeth **294** to more securely hold a strap in place than existing levers which comprise flat profiles. Lever **284** and sloped portion **295** define a portion of a channel **271** through which a strap may be configured to pass. The logarithmic curve profile **273**

and/or sloped portion **295** may advantageously be adapted for use with any of the embodiments heretofore or hereafter mentioned.

A user can adjust a length of the strap assembly **252** between the buckle **280** and the foot by pressing the lever **284** to disengage from the strap assembly **252**, and then release the lever **284** once the desired length is determined at which point the spring **286** biases the lever **284** against the strap assembly **252**. This method of operation makes it so the strap assembly **252** is adjustable with a single hand, and the ankle component **200** stays in place on the ankle when the strap assembly **252** is tightened. The buckle **280** enables length adjustment of the strap, and permits easy replacement of the strap if it becomes worn or no longer effective. The buckle also allows the universal use of a wrap-type foot component (as in FIG. 7) or an inlay or mounting element (as in FIG. 12), or other mounting means described herein to the foot of a user.

FIGS. 10 and 11 disclose an embodiment of a foot component **300** adapted as a shoeless version of a drop foot orthoses. In this embodiment, the foot component **300** includes a body **302** having a main section **308** and a wing section **310**. The main section **308** is adapted to extend about the sole of the user's foot, and the wing section **310** is adapted to wrap about the top of the foot in combination with at least one strap **304** extending from the main section **310**. The at least one strap **304** is adapted to secure over an outer surface **314** of the body **302**. The strap assembly **306** is secured to the wing section **310**. The method of securing the strap assembly **306** to the wing section **310** may be a slit **312** through which the strap assembly secures or slides through. Alternative methods for securing the strap assembly **306** to the wing section **310** are described in FIGS. 17, 18 and 19. The ankle component **300** may include similar or any of the features discussed with the embodiment of FIGS. 4 and 5, inclusive the padding, thermoforming, traction features, layers, debossed segment, and connection with a buckle or attachment component.

FIG. 12 depicts an embodiment of a strap assembly **320** includes a mounting element **328**, such a flexible inlay. The strap assembly **320** includes a main segment **322** and at least one elastic segment **324** secured directly to the main segment **322**. The at least one elastic segment **324** may include two elastic segments **324** parallel and generally coextensive with one another for improved stretchability and control of the strap assembly **320**, when tensioned. A pull tab **330** is at a first end of the strap assembly **320** and preferably directly secured to the main segment **322**, and a securing tab **326** is preferably directly secured to the mounting element **328**. An advantage to the elastic segment **324** is that it gives support during the swing phase by accommodating the movement between the foot and the ankle, and allows for voluntary plantar flexion (as opposed to an inelastic segment that does not permit articulation). The elastic connection is adjustable between ankle and a foot component.

FIG. 13 illustrates another embodiment of a strap assembly **340** likewise including a main segment **342**, at least one elastic segment **344**, and a pull tab **350**. The strap assembly **340** has a coupling part **346** defining a keyhole **348** opening for securing to an anchor mountable onto a shoe, an anchoring assembly, or a foot component, as discussed in combination with the embodiments of FIGS. 14A-20B.

Referring to FIGS. 14A and 14B, the orthopedic device **100** includes a strap assembly **150** extending from the ankle component **102** to an anchor **174** for securing to a shoe (as shown in FIG. 15), or a foot component (as described above). The strap assembly **150** preferably includes at least

one elastic segment **152** that connects at a first end to a securing tab **158** defining a keyhole **160**, and at a second end to main segment **154**. The inelastic strap segment **154** secures to a buckle **156** adapted for coupling to the strap attachment **112** on the main support **102**. The buckle **156** has a ratcheting handle **162** adapted to permit the user to adjust the length of the strap assembly, particularly the inelastic strap body **154**.

In the embodiment of FIG. 14A, the buckle **156** replaces the strap attachment **112** depicted in the embodiment of FIGS. 2 and 3, as the buckle **156** is mounted on the main support **102**. The buckle **156** preferably includes a ratcheting device for winding the inelastic strap body **152** thereabout for resizing the length of the strap assembly **150**.

FIG. 15 depicts the orthopedic device **100** secured to the lower leg LL and the shoe S of the user. A shoe attachment system **172** includes the anchor **174** secured to an eyelet E of the user's shoe S. In this embodiment, footwear or shoe S is worn without the aforementioned foot component, and the footwear or shoe S itself qualifies as a foot component for receiving and selective placement of the anchor **174**. In the embodiment of FIG. 15, attachment tab **170** attaches strap body **152** to buckle **116**.

FIG. 16 depicts an embodiment of the anchor **174** arranged in a nut-and-bolt construction. The anchor includes a first head **178** for extending above or outside the shoe or foot component. A shaft **180** extends from the first head **178** to a second head **182**, adapted to rest above a layer or thickness of a first side **176** of a shoe or foot component. The shaft **180** defines an internal thread **184** into which a screw **188** engages and passes through a washer **186** arranged for abutting against a second side of a shoe.

In use, the anchor **174** is installed in a shoe eyelet E, either on a lateral L or medial M side of the shoe, providing the user lateral or medial control. The terms medial and lateral have their generally understood meanings, particularly in regard to footwear. Specifically, medial means towards the middle of the body or inside of the foot, and lateral means towards the outside of the body or outside of the foot. The anchor **174** may be secured to a foot component, as depicted in FIGS. 10 and 11, through an eyelet in the wing section **310**. The wing section **310** may have a plurality of eyelets positioned from the medial to the lateral side. The user may have more lateral or more medial support from the device, depending on which eyelet is chose.

A plate as in the prior art may be provided under the laces with an anchor provided thereon for securing to the tab **158** of the strap assembly **150**. The main support **102** is wrapped about the lower leg LL with the straps and main support **102** combining to circumferentially extend about the lower leg LL, preferably with the supplemental support **114** about the Achilles heel. The strap assembly **150** is drawn from the main support **102** once installed upon the lower leg LL and against the elasticity of the strap body **152**, and secured about the anchor **174**.

FIG. 17 depicts the ankle component **200** of FIG. 4 coupled to a foot component **258** by the strap assembly **252** and adjusted by the attachment component **250**. The coupling part **256** engages an anchor **400** carried by the foot component **258**. The arrangement in FIG. 17, unlike in the embodiment of FIG. 15, enables the orthopedic device to be worn without shoes.

FIG. 18 depicts the anchor **400** as being connected to the foot component **258** because a cable **402** extends from the foot component **258** and is maintained by a retainer **404**. The cable **402** may be arranged to be tied at an end **408** so the

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length of the cable **402** or segment thereof carrying the anchor **400** may be adjustable depending on the user's requirements.

FIG. **19** shows an embodiment of an anchor **400** attached to an inlay or mounting plate **406**. The anchor **400** includes a fastener **412** having a shaft for extending through an aperture **414** defined by the inlay **406** and receiving a cap **410**. The cap **414** is arranged for extending above the inlay **406** to permit securing to the coupling part in other views. The inlay **406** has a shape with a flared first region and a narrower second region to make it intuitive for donning because the shape generally conforms to a general shape of a foot, with the second portion closer to the toes, and the first portion closer to the leg.

FIG. **20A** illustrates how the inlay **406** is inserted into the instep of a shoe and below laces. FIG. **20B** depicts the ankle component **200** as coupled to the strap assembly **252** adjusted by the attachment component **252**. The coupling part **256** is placed over the anchor **400** protruding through the laces or from the shoe.

It is to be understood that not necessarily all objects or advantages may be achieved under any embodiment of the disclosure. Those skilled in the art will recognize that the orthopedic device may be embodied or carried out in a manner that achieves or optimizes one advantage or group of advantages as taught herein without necessarily achieving other objects or advantages as taught or suggested herein.

The skilled artisan will recognize the interchangeability of various disclosed features. Besides the variations described, other known equivalents for each feature can be mixed and matched by one of ordinary skill in this art to construct an orthopedic device under principles of the present disclosure. It will be understood by the skilled artisan that the features described may be adapted to other types of orthopedic devices. Hence this disclosure and the embodiments and variations thereof are not limited to knee braces, but can be utilized in any orthopedic devices.

Although this disclosure describes certain exemplary embodiments and examples of an orthopedic device, it therefore will be understood by those skilled in the art that the present disclosure extends beyond the specifically disclosed knee brace embodiments to other alternative embodiments and/or uses of the disclosure and obvious modifications and equivalents thereof. It is intended that the present disclosure should not be limited by the particular disclosed embodiments described above, and may be extended to orthopedic devices and supports, and other applications that may employ the features described herein.

The invention claimed is:

1. An orthopedic device, comprising:

a main support adapted to secure about a lower leg, wherein the main support defines a curved shape having a semi-rigid or rigid form, and arranged to resiliently maintain the curved shape between donning and doffing of the orthopedic device;

at least one strap extending from the main support and arranged to wrap about an ankle;

a strap assembly having a first portion coupling to the main support, and a second portion arranged to be drawn therefrom, the strap assembly including a main segment and at least one elastic segment attached to the main segment, the strap assembly located between the first and second portions, the main segment being less elastic than the at least one elastic segment and including the first portion;

an anchor for receiving and attaching to the second portion of the strap assembly;

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an attachment component secured to the main support the first portion of the strap assembly coupling to the attachment component, the attachment component including a base and lateral wings extending laterally from the base over the main support and forming the curved shape of the main support, the base being centrally located on the main support at an apex of the curved shape thereof.

2. The orthopedic device of claim **1**, further comprising a foot component upon which the anchor is positioned.

3. The orthopedic device of claim **2**, wherein the foot component defines at least two apertures among which the anchor is selectively secured to the foot component.

4. The orthopedic device of claim **2**, wherein the foot component includes at least two straps extending from a main portion of the foot component, the at least two straps defining a clearance therebetween and over the main portion at which the anchor is secured.

5. The orthopedic device of claim **1**, wherein the strap assembly is releasably attached to the anchor and adjustable in length at the first portion relative to the main support.

6. The orthopedic device of claim **1**, wherein the attachment component comprises a lever arranged to bias against the base and to grasp the first portion of the strap assembly, the lever and the base defining a channel therebetween in which a wedge of the lever is urged against the strap assembly, the lever having a substantially logarithmic curve profile.

7. The orthopedic device of claim **6**, wherein an end of the first portion defines a tab extending from a first end of the attachment component, and the first portion extends through the lever and from a second end of the lever device towards the anchor.

8. The orthopedic device of claim **6**, wherein the base defines a sloped portion and the lever defines teeth proximate the channel.

9. The orthopedic device of claim **1**, wherein the main segment has a first end from which a tab extends and a second end at which a first end of the at least one elastic segment secures.

10. The orthopedic device of claim **1**, wherein a second end of the at least one elastic segment carries a coupling part securable to the anchor.

11. The orthopedic device of claim **10**, wherein the coupling part defines a keyhole adapted to receive a head of the anchor and engage a shaft extending from the head due to bias of the at least one elastic segment pulling the coupling part toward the leg support.

12. An orthopedic device, comprising:

a main support adapted to secure about a lower leg, wherein the main support defines a curved shape having a semi-rigid or rigid form, and arranged to resiliently maintain the curved shape between donning and doffing of the orthopedic device;

at least one strap extending from the main support and arranged to wrap around an ankle;

a strap assembly having a first portion coupling to the main support, and a second portion arranged to be drawn therefrom, the strap assembly including a main segment and at least one elastic segment attached to the main segment, the strap assembly located between the first and second portions, the main segment being less elastic than the at least one elastic segment and including the first portion;

a foot component adapted to secure about a foot; an anchor for receiving and attaching to the second portion of the strap assembly and selectively positioned

on a foot component, wherein the anchor is adjustable from a relative to a neutral strap assembly orientation to an offset orientation, such that the strap assembly extends at a non-parallel angle between the main support and the anchor relative to the neutral orientation; 5
an attachment component secured to the main support the first portion of the strap assembly coupling to the attachment component, the attachment component including a base and lateral wings extending laterally from the base over the main support and forming the 10
curved shape of the main support, the base being centrally located on the main support at an apex of the curved shape thereof.

13. The orthopedic device of claim **12**, wherein the attachment component comprises a lever arranged to bias 15
against the base and to grasp the first portion of the strap assembly, the lever and the base defining a channel therebetween in which a wedge of the lever is urged against the strap assembly, the lever having a substantially logarithmic curve profile. 20

14. The orthopedic device of claim **13**, wherein the base defines a sloped portion and the lever defines teeth proximate the channel.

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